LIFESTYLE / C1

The bone robbers among us

METRO / A17

Dismissed Pasay Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto fails once again to retake old post

NEWS / A2

Palparan says he's not sure of running but others egging him on

WORLD / A19

Female suicide bomber kills 40 at Baghdad college's gate

First Gent challenges lawyer: Wanna fight?

WAG KAYO DYAN! DUN KAYO SA BOXING ARENA!

By Allison W. Lopez

ENGAGING IN A SHOUTing match with a defense lawyer and challenging him to settle the dispute outside the courtroom may not be the behavior expected of someone

FIRST GENT/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, February 27, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 81 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

UN hits use of Pinoy, foreign mercenaries

GENEVA—METHODS USED BY PRIVATE western security companies to recruit mercenaries in poor countries like the Philippines and send them into dangerous areas like Iraq are deeply worrying, according to a UN report to be presented next month.

Private security guards employed by western companies make up the second highest number

UN HITS/ A6

13 Rangers hurt, 1 captured in clash with MNLF fighters; 6 rebels killed

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SCOUT RANGERS chased Abu Sayyaf bandits who fled into a Moro National Liberation Front camp on Jolo island late Sunday, sparking a gun battle with MNLF fighters that left 13 soldiers wounded, military officials said.

One soldier, whose identity was not immediately known, was taken prisoner by the MNLF during the 90-minute clash in Indanan that erupted in the midst of the joint RP-US Balikatan military exercises in Sulu.

"We also monitored that six were killed from the other side and an undetermined number were wounded," said Maj. Eugene Batara, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command.

Sunday's assault on the MNLF camp at Sitio Marang, Barangay Buanza, was mounted after the military received reports that the MNLF was coddling Abu Sayyaf bandits, said Brig. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan, commander of the joint special operations forces there.

It followed a clash on Friday between soldiers and the Abu Sayyaf group 2 kilometers from where Philippine and US Forces were building a road and a

13 RANGERS/ A6

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIP

JOAN BONDOC

THE MILITARY presents three alleged former members of the New People's Army who revealed supposed existence of NPA "kangaroo courts." *(Story on Page A2.)*

US urges end to killings

RP should prosecute violators —Kenney

By Cynthia D. Balana
and Michael Lim Ubac

THE UNITED STATES yesterday expressed concern over the spate of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and called for the prosecution of those involved.

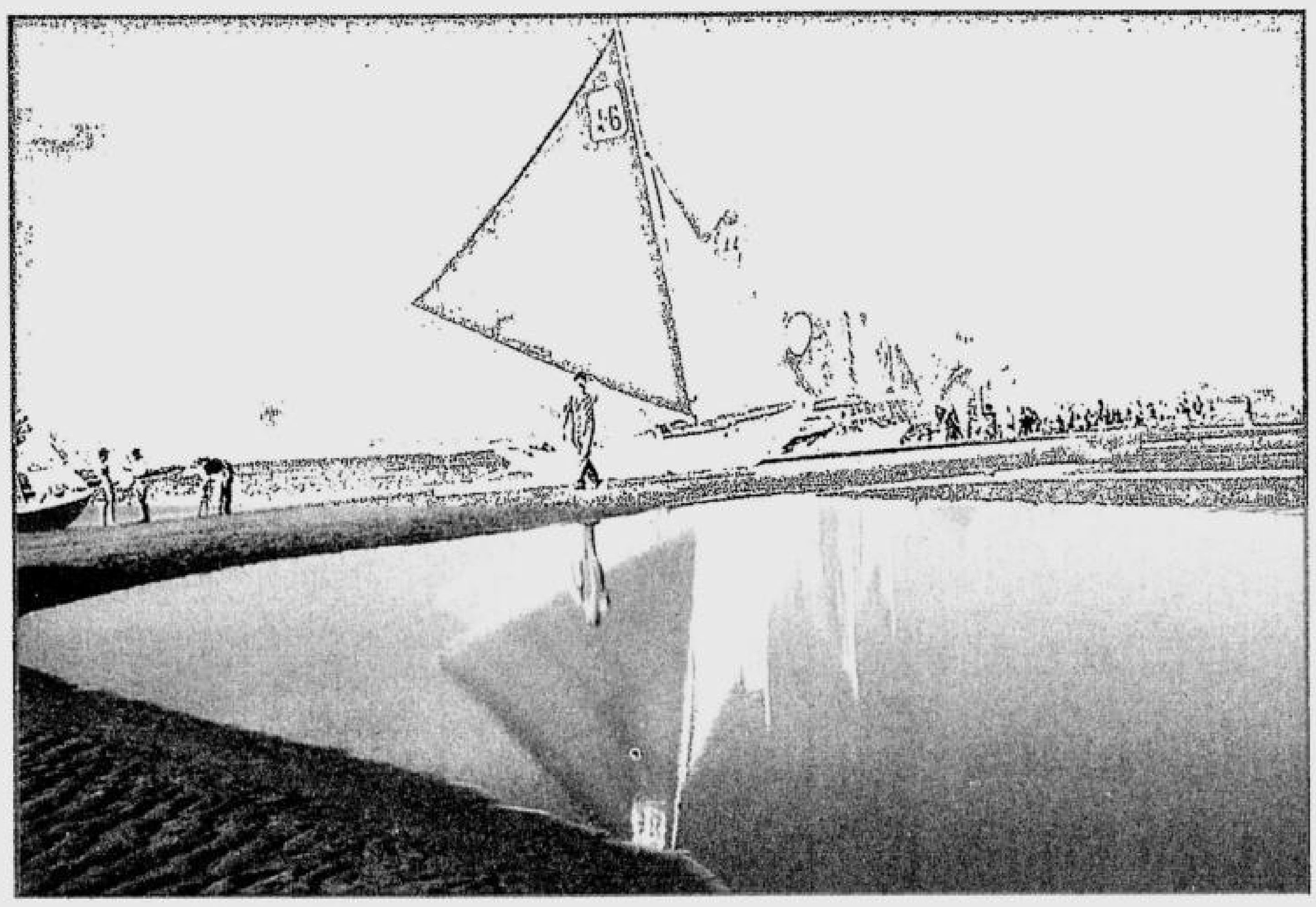
US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney made the call as President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose administration has come under fire over the killings, declared her resolve to stop the spate of murders of political activists and journalists.

The United States has placed a strong value on respect for human rights although it has itself been accused of major violations, especially in the conduct of its war in Iraq.

Kenney spoke to reporters after the launch of the Task Force on Anti-Trafficking in Persons at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. *(See photo on Page A2.)*

Asked if the United States was concerned about the series of killings of activists in the Philippines, Kenney said: "We are concerned. We take extrajudicial killings or murders seriously throughout the world. Human rights are critical to every country

US URGES/ A8



SAIL, SAND, SEA AND SKY
The colorful "paraw" (native outriggers) at rest before the boat race begins. Hundreds of spectators came to Iloilo City for the 35th year of the paraw regatta held early this month.

ARNOLD ALMACEN/VISAYAS

Retake test, Palace tells 2006 nurses

By Juliet L. Javellana
and Nikko Dizon

RETAKE THE NURSING EXAMINATION—or work elsewhere.

Thus declared Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol following the decision of the US-based Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to bar the entry into the United States of Filipino nurses who passed the leak-tainted June 2006 nursing licensure examinations unless they retook the tests.

Another Palace official, Commission on Filipino Overseas Chair Dante Ang, said the Professional Regulation Commission should not give false hopes to the Filipino nurses by pushing for an appeal which the CGFNS had already said would be futile.

Apostol said Filipino nurses wanting to work in the United States were left

RETAKE/ A8

GO now 'officially eleven'; Kiko out

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

LEADERS OF THE GENUINE OPPOSITION are set to junk reelectionist Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who is running as an independent although he is in GO's senatorial slate.

"Our position with respect to Kiko Pangilinan is, officially our candidates will be 11," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay told reporters yesterday after a meeting of GO leaders in his office.

"But don't expect us to say bad things about him because we share the same position [on some political issues]. We won't say bad things about him and he won't say bad things about us," Binay said.

GO campaign manager San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, who was also at the meeting, said the GO ticket would not campaign for Pangilinan.

"It would be unfair if we still mention his name [in the campaign]. That's unfair to the other cooperative candidates," Ejercito said.

But GO campaign spokesperson Adel Tamano told reporters at the GO headquarters in Mandaluyong City that Pangilinan was still part of the opposition's slate.

"So far it's status quo. He's still our official candidate although he'll not be part of our sorties ... He won't be officially dropped yet because a decision has not been made," Tamano said.

Pangilinan assumed yesterday that he had been officially dropped from the GO ticket.

GO NOW/ A8

Hope: I've said everything I wanted to say

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

THE PUBLIC COULDN'T GET ENOUGH of the Hope-James-Kris love triangle which boosted ratings on Sunday for rival networks GMA 7 and ABS-CBN.

Hope Centeno is the beauty clinic receptionist who claims she had a 10-month illicit affair with basketball player

HOPE/ A4

Scorsese finally bags an Oscar for 'Departed'

LOS ANGELES—IN A YEAR OF UNPARalleled diversity and international muscle at Hollywood's film honors, the Academy Awards finished as a love fest for a long-overlooked American—Martin Scorsese.

After Scorsese's five previous losses in the direction category, he won for the mob epic "The Departed," which also won best picture at Sunday's ceremonies.

Awards watchers had viewed Scorsese as a lock to win at last, and while he clearly coveted an Oscar, the director said he had not counted on anything.

"It was an overwhelming, overwhelming moment for me, I must say. I didn't know. When people say, 'It's your year, your year.' Thank God we've been able to

SCORSESE/ A4

Oscar win sparks talk of Gore White House run

OSCAR'S BEST: From left, Forest Whitaker, Best Actor for "The Last King of Scotland"; Jennifer Hudson, Best Supporting Actress, "Dreamgirls"; Helen Mirren, Best Actress, "The Queen," and Alan Arkin, Best Supporting Actor, "Little Miss Sunshine." AFP

HOLLYWOOD—FLUSH WITH AN OSCAR for his environmental jeremiad "An Inconvenient Truth," Al Gore faces growing speculation that he might ride the winds of political climate change to a new bid for the presidency.

The Democrat insists he has no plans to run for the White House in 2008, eight years after being edged out by George W. Bush in a bruising recount battle that still smarts today.

But the former vice president's bandwagon may be gaining steam, fueled by an Academy Award on Sunday for best documentary and a global warming issue whose time appears to have come.

Gore, 58, did little to curb expectations as he appeared on stage at Sunday's ceremonies with heartthrob Leonardo DiCaprio to hail the use of "environmentally intelligent practices" in producing the awards show.

Prodded by DiCaprio on whether he

OSCAR SPARKS/ A4

FORMER US Vice President Al Gore, at left, and Davis Guggenheim pose with their Oscar for best documentary feature. AP

Second FrontPage

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Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
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(All in exact order)
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and the eastern section of Central Luzon will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the coun try will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/26/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Palparan undecided on run for Congress

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Retired Army Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan said yesterday he was not yet certain he would run for a seat in Congress although supporters in the "anti-communist crusade" were urging him to do so.

"I'm not yet sure," he told the INQUIRER by phone on Monday, speaking in Filipino.

Palparan, 56, who retired last September, has been denounced by leftist groups as a "butcher," for the many killings and human rights violations in areas where he had been assigned.

He said he and Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., had briefly discussed the prospect of his becoming a party-list representative. "Nothing definite was reached in our talk," Palparan said.

Palparan said his wife was opposed to his political plans, but he said he was also thinking of the well-being and safety of the ordinary people, including former rebels who were now supporting the anti-communist cause.

"They're in a sorry situation ... They felt I had abandoned them," he said, referring in particular to his supporters in Samar. He said many supporters there had been killed by communist New People's Army guerrillas.

Supporters have urged him to run for public office, he said.

"I just ignored them but the idea has been at the back of my mind," he said. "It is only now that the plan is somewhat being concretized because I'm out of the Armed Forces."

He denied reports that he was seeking a congressional seat to shield himself from possible criminal suits. The Malacañang-created Melo Commission has named him a prime suspect in extrajudicial killings in various regions.

Pointing out that no criminal case has been filed against him, Palparan said, "I will not seek public office to shield myself. I will deal with any case that may arise."

Asked when he would make his decision known, he said: "I will decide when things will be favorable for me."

Palace view

Malacañang sees no reason Palparan should not aspire for Congress.

"He is qualified to do that. He can run, there is no prohibition," Chief Presidential Legal Adviser Sergio Apostol said.

But party-list lawmakers vehemently rejected the idea of Palparan being in the House of Representatives.

"The butcher has no place in Congress. His rightful place is in the Muntinlupa jail for his responsibility in the extrajudicial killings," Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza told the INQUIRER in a text message.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran urged fellow members of the progressive movement to "do our best to make sure he doesn't win."

"If (he) ran for a position in hell, he'd win and take over," said the ailing 74-year-old lawmaker in a statement issued from the Philippine Heart Center where he has been detained for a year on rebellion charges.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo could only imagine a 14th Congress including Palparan together with Virgilio Garcillano, and Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante.

Garcillano, alleged architect of President Macapagal-Arroyo's purported manipulation of votes in 2004, and Bolante, alleged mastermind of the multimillion-peso fertilizer fund scam, have reportedly expressed their willingness to run for Congress.

"What do they want Congress to turn into?" Ocampo said in a telephone interview with the INQUIRER.

With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christian V. Esguerra, Jerome Aning, and Grace Cantal-Albasin and Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao

TASK FORCE AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN

GUARD AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING
United States Ambassador Kristie Kenney and Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Severino Gana Jr. shake on it during the launch of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons at the Naia yesterday. An estimated 400,000 women and 100,000 children are trafficked annually in the Philippines, according to the 2005 US Human Rights Report. "It's a global crime and you could never say, 'Oh well, it only matters to only one country.' This is critical in the US as well," Kenney said. Looking on is Manila International Airport Authority General Manager Alfonso Cusi.

JESS YUSON

AFP gives proof of Red vs Red

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY BEgan to bolster its claim that most of the string of "unexplained killings" were perpetrated by the communist New People's Army.

In a news conference in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, the military presented former NPA members who said the armed group had set up "kangaroo courts" in villages in Quezon province that tried and ordered the execution not only of fellow NPA members and supporters but ordinary citizens.

In presenting the former rebels, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro lashed out anew at the Melo Commission and UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston for dismissing the military's contention that many of the killings were the handiwork of NPA rebels.

"The existence of NPA kangaroo courts in the Bondoc Peninsula substantiates the claims of the Armed Forces of the Philippines that the Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA themselves are mainly responsible for the extrajudicial killings not only of leftist and militant personalities but also of persons who are perceived to be counterrevolutionaries who needed to be eliminated," Bacarro said.

The military called attention to the case of one Romulo de Villa, who they said was accused by NPA rebels of being a government informant and brutally killed by them in Mulanay, Quezon, in February 2005.

De Villa's daughter, "Grace," a former rebel, denounced her former comrades for killing her father who she said was abducted by the rebels while visiting relatives.

Ex-rebel-turned-AFP enlisted man "Dennis" said the NPA kangaroo court would be given information regarding suspects upon which they based their judgment.

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Leviste petitions court for bail

By DJ Yap

FORMER BATANGAS GOV. JOSE Antonio Leviste has asked a Makati City court to allow him to post bail in connection with the murder charges lodged against him.

Leviste, charged with killing his long-time aide Rafael de las Alas, filed an urgent application for admission to bail before Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 150.

He said he was entitled to bail even though he is facing a murder charge because "evidence of guilt is not strong."

The bail application was filed by Leviste's lawyers on Friday afternoon shortly before he was rushed to the Makati Medical Center after complaining of dizziness and shortness of breath.

His physician, Dr. Raynato Kasilag, said in a medical bulletin dated Feb. 24 that Leviste, who was admitted for hypovolemic shock secondary to acute gastrointestinal bleeding, was in "stable but guarded condition."

He was scheduled for a colonoscopy yesterday, Kasilag said.

Makati City jail officer in charge Supt. Delvic Oreiro informed Alameda in a letter yesterday about Leviste's confinement and medical condition, but he did not indicate how long Leviste would be staying in the hospital.

In his application, Leviste said he should be allowed bail "in the absence of any competent or credible testimony that accused committed the crime under any of the alleged aggravating qualifying circumstances."

He said state prosecutors failed to establish that he had killed De las Alas with "treachery, evident premeditation and cruelty," since there were no eyewitnesses to the shooting.

Leviste added that Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco had based his findings on "mere theories, surmises, speculations, conjectures, could haves, should haves and possibilities."

He stressed that he was not waiving the pursuit of his petition before the Court of Appeals questioning the reinvestigation and the upgrading of his case from homicide to murder.

'Bolante options slim after losing asylum bid'

By Volt Contreras

A LAWYER SEEKING THE REPAtriation of fugitive Jocelyn "Joc Joc" Bolante yesterday said the former agriculture undersecretary's reported failure to secure political asylum in the United States had left him with only two options.

Lawyer Harry Roque said Bolante, accused of being the bagman in the so-called 2004 "fertilizer scam," could either spend three more years in a US jail waiting for the resolution of an appeal of his case, or return to the Philippines.

"Bolante has no more choice but to voluntarily return to the country or be deported, because his other alternative would be to spend up to three more years behind bars during his appeal," according to Roque.

Roque said an appeal usually took three years "on the average," based on published US immigration cases he had studied.

"If he decides to return, the bad news for the Arroyo administration is that he has to answer embarrassing questions (about the alleged scam) in an election year," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The opposition has claimed that money sourced from the fertilizer fund of the Department of Agriculture was distributed to local leaders to help ensure President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory in the 2004 elections.

Should Bolante return, Roque said, "someone will finally explain" why the Commission on Audit reported that money from the fund either ended up being used to buy "orchid and not rice fertilizer," or distributed to "nonexistent" farmers' groups, or given not during the planting but harvesting season.

Roque was reported by another daily on Monday as having said that a US judge had denied Bolante's petition for political asylum for lack of proof that "he is suffering from a well-grounded fear of persecution."

The newspaper (not the INQUIRER) quoted Roque as saying that it was the immigration court in Chicago, Illinois, that denied Bolante's petition last week.

Roque said he would go to Chicago soon to personally verify the decision and obtain more information regarding Bolante's appeal.

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NPA leader killed

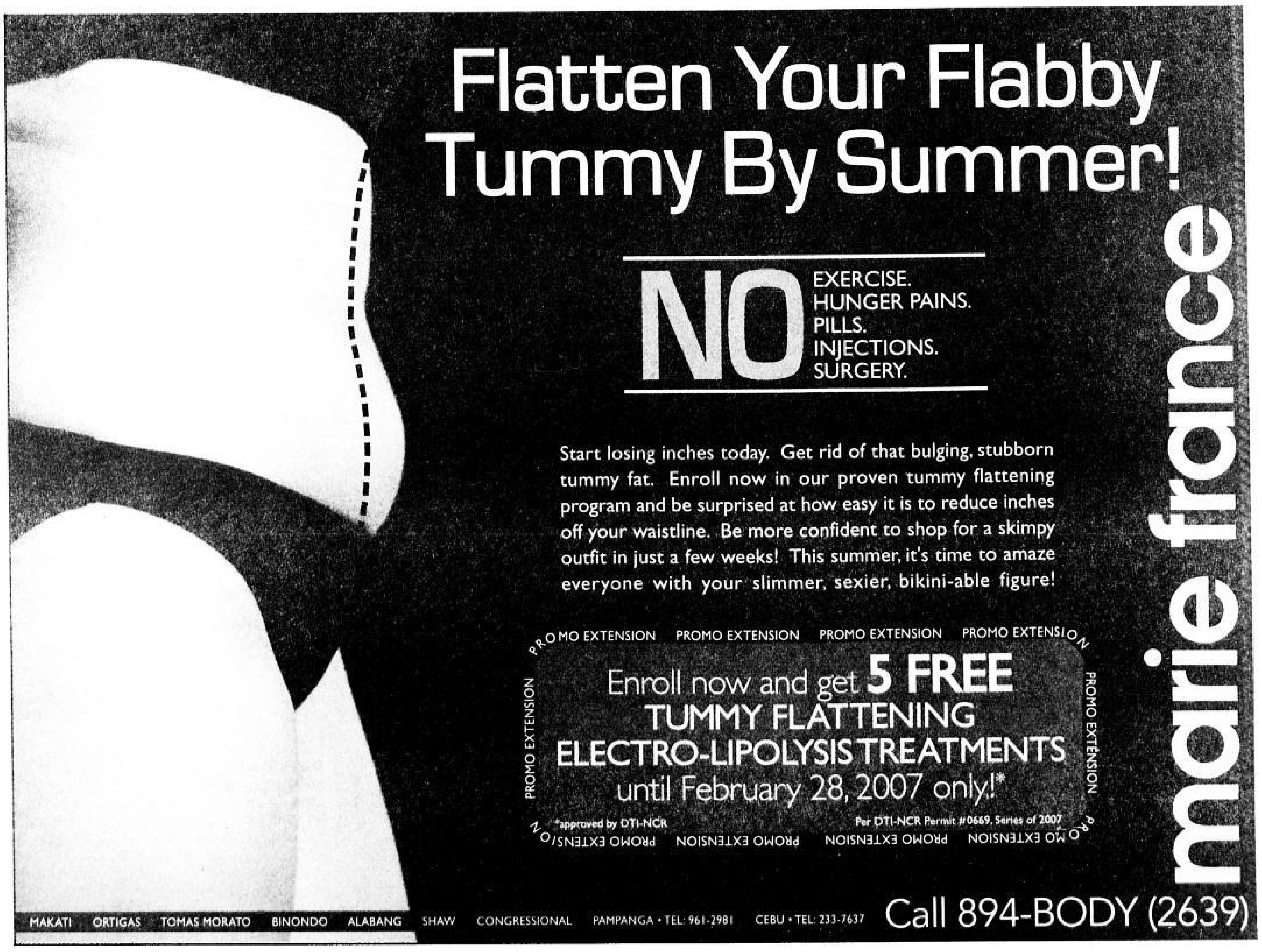
CEBU CITY—THREE hours after being arrested, a top leader of the New People's Army in Leyte was killed yesterday in Kananga town while allegedly trying to escape.

Antonio Ramos was arrested at a checkpoint in Jaro town early yesterday and was being transported in a six-by-six truck when he reportedly tried to escape by grabbing an M16 rifle from one of his military escorts.

"There was a scuffle and [Ramos] fired a shot. Eventually, he was shot by another soldier," Lt. Col. Lope Dagoy, 19th Infantry Battalion commander, said in Cebuano.

Dagoy dismissed speculations that Ramos had been summarily executed by his men, saying they had evidence to back their story.

Ramos, 52, also known as Kumander Mando and Kumander Pingkoy, was identified as the newly installed secretary of the Northern Leyte Front. *Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas*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Scorsese finally bags an Oscar …

From page A1

THE BIG FOUR: Hotshot directors, from left, Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas pose backstage after Scorsese won the Oscar for best director during the 79th Academy Awards on Sunday in Los Angeles. AP

make so many films over the last 36 years without winning awards. But we've been able to get the pictures made," Scorsese told reporters backstage. "This comes as an extraordinary surprise."

Bland ceremony

There were a couple of real surprises in the relatively predictable and bland Oscar ceremony, which ran almost four hours under the pleasant but lightweight stewardship of first-time host Ellen DeGeneres.

Front-runners actress Helen Mirren of "The Queen," actor Forest Whitaker of "The Last King of Scotland" and supporting actress Jennifer Hudson of "Dreamgirls" all won. But the fourth front-runner, Eddie Murphy, lost the supporting actor award to Alan Arkin of "Little Miss Sunshine."

"For 50 years and more, Elizabeth Windsor has maintained her dignity, her sense of duty and her hairstyle," said Mirren, who has been on a remarkable roll since last fall, winning all the major film and television prizes for playing both of Britain's Queen Elizabeths.

"She's had her feet planted firmly on the ground, her hat on her head, her handbag on her arm and she's weathered many, many storms. If it wasn't for her, I most certainly wouldn't be here. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the queen," Mirren said, holding her Oscar aloft.

'The Queen'

Along with her best-actress Oscar for "The Queen," Mirren won an Emmy as the current ruler's 16th and 17th century namesake in the TV miniseries "Elizabeth I." The two roles earned Mirren a pair of prizes at the Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild Awards.

In "The Queen," Mirren offers a remarkable portrait of Elizabeth II as both a tradition-bound aristocrat and a concerned family matriarch as she copes with the crisis of Princess Diana's death.

Mirren said backstage that she had no clue what the queen might think of the film or her performance.

"I'm not expecting a call from her majesty. Not ever. I wouldn't expect it and I wouldn't desire it," Mirren said backstage. "There are many countries in the world where one would not be allowed to make this film. It's generous of the queen and the royal family to sit back and not interfere. I do believe she is a noble person in the best sense of the word."

"The Departed" led the Oscars with four prizes, also winning for adapted screenplay and film editing. While Hollywood films and American actors still dominated, the ceremony offered its most global reach ever.

Mexican honor

Mexican director Guillermo del Toro's dark fantasy "Pan's Labyrinth" won three Oscars, including the cinematography prize.

The globe-trotting ensemble drama "Babel," made by Del Toro's countryman Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, had seven nominations, though it won only one, for best score by composer Gustavo Santaolalla. It was the second-straight Oscar for Santaolalla, who received the same prize a year ago for "Brokeback Mountain."

"It's an amazing statement on what's going on. We have to be connected as a planet," said Whitaker, who won best actor as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland." "This year, you see people from all over the world. We need that. We need to understand that this over here is connected to this over there. We have to pay attention and understand that I affect you and you affect me."

Germany's "The Lives of Others," about a playwright and his actress-girlfriend who come under police surveillance in 1980s East Berlin, won the foreign-language Oscar.

Long career

On stage, director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck thanked his actors and crew and had a special word of thanks for fellow native German speaker Arnold Schwarzenegger, "for teaching me that the words 'I can't' should be stricken from my vocabulary,'" Von Donnersmarck said.

Italian film composer Ennio Morricone won an honorary Oscar for his long career. The 78-year-old has been nominated five times—for "Days of Heaven," "The Mission," "The Untouchables," "Bugsy" and "Malena"—but had never won.

The dancing-penguin musical "Happy Feet" won for feature-length animation, beating "Cars," directed by computer-animation pioneer John Lasseter ("Toy Story"), whose film had triumphed at other key Hollywood awards. *AP*

Oscar win sparks talk of Gore White House run

From page A1

had any other major announcement to make, Gore started to mock a "my fellow Americans" declaration of his intentions—only to be drowned out by the orchestra and hustled off stage.

Solid compromise

Some political commentators see Gore as a solid compromise candidate for Democrats if frontrunners Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama and John Edwards battle to a stalemate in next year's nomination tussles.

The London-based Economist magazine dubbed Gore an "ideal" choice for Democrats, with his early opposition to the Iraq war, his environmental credentials and a grudge to settle with Bush.

"What better way of wiping out the Bush era than replacing him with the man who should have been president," the weekly said in its latest issue.

Jimmy Carter, former president and Nobel Peace Prize winner, said he has been trying to persuade Gore to throw his hat in the ring.

"I've put so much pressure on Al to run that he's almost gotten aggravated with me", Carter said in an interview Sunday on ABC television.

Geeky hero

Such interest in Gore seemed unlikely after the 2000 presidential race that earned him the reputation as dull, pedantic and one of the worst campaigners ever to tread the US political trail.

But the stunning box-office success of "An Inconvenient Truth" has made the Tennessean the geeky hero of the green set, adored by Hollywood stars and tweedy conservationists who call him "The Goracle." "Al Gore, Rock Star," the Washington Post rhapsodized Sunday on its front page, under a picture of Gore with rap star Queen Latifah. It dubbed him perhaps "the coolest ex-vice president ever." Gore was lathered in praise at the Oscars ceremonies, including a ringing tribute from songwriter Melissa Etheridge when she took a second Oscar for "An Inconvenient Truth" with her song "I Need to Wake Up." "I have to thank Al Gore for inspiring us, inspiring me, showing that caring about the Earth is not Republican or Democrat, it's not red or blue," she said.

'All green'

"We are all green." Gore's star turn at the Oscars came two weeks after he triggered massive cheers from the glitterati of the music world as one of the presenters at the Grammy awards in Los Angeles.

He's been hanging with rappers Diddy and Ludacris and got a big hug from screen siren Cameron Diaz last week when they announced plans for a worldwide "Live Earth" concert in July to fight global warming.

Whether politically motivated or not, Gore has been building a base among youthful voters as co-founder of Current TV, a forum for young adults to sound off on social issues carried by Yahoo! and various cable TV companies.

Sunday's Academy Award was likely to heighten the buzz among political pundits of a possible presidential run for the crusading environmental globe-trotter.

Next, Nobel prize

And the crescendo could get louder later this year with Gore mentioned as a contender for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Gore, who was Bill Clinton's vice president from 1993 to 2001, has been working to damp down speculation of a try for the top spot in the wide-open November 2008 election. *AFP*

OSCAR WINNERS

Selected category winners of the 79th Annual Academy Awards

Best Motion Picture
The Departed *Martin Scorsese*

Best Lead Actor
Forest Whitaker
The Last King of Scotland

Best Lead Actress
Helen Mirren The Queen

Best Supporting Actor
Alan Arkin Little Miss Sunshine

Best Supporting Actress
Jennifer Hudson Dreamgirls

Best Director
Martin Scorsese The Departed

Best Foreign Language Film
The Lives of Others
Germany

Best Cinematography
Pan's Labyrinth
Guillermo Navarro

Best Original Screenplay
Little Miss Sunshine
Michael Arndt

Best Animated Feature Film
Happy Feet
Warner Bros.

NKTI holds Post-Graduate Course on Hemodialysis Access

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In connection with this, the National Kidney and Transplant Institute through the Departments of Nephrology, Vascular and Organ Transplantation and Radiology in association with the Philippine Society for Vascular Surgery will conduct a post-graduate course with the theme "Essential Concepts of Hemodialysis Vascular Access and Management of Access Complications", on March 10, 2007 at NKTI conference room.

This course will provide a basic introduction to diagnostic and interventional procedures regarding hemodialysis vascular access and its complications. It will also provide hands-on training or real-time viewing focusing on various components of these various procedures. The course provides an opportunity to interact closely with highly experienced faculty in both didactic and hands-on sessions. For more details, you can call

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The Judicial and Bar Council announces the opening of the positions of (1) **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the SUPREME COURT** which will be vacated on 28 April 2007 upon the compulsory retirement of **HON. ROMEO J. CALLEJO SR.** and (2) **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE of the COURT OF APPEALS**, vice **HON. ROBERTO A. BARRIOS** who passed away on 18 February 2007.

Applications or recommendations must be submitted NOT LATER THAN March 9, 2007, to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512 • Fax No. 552-9598; e-mail address jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph; jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph). Applicants must submit 6 copies of the following:

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Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form 1 down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)
Picture (2x2)
Certificate of Good Standing or latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer
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Clearances from NBI, Ombudsman, Office of the Bar Confidant and employer
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February 26, 2007

MsVillarama
MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court &
Ex-Officio Secretary

(PDI – February 27, 2007)

Hope: I've said everything …

From page A1

James Yap, husband of TV host Kris Aquino, who is now in the seventh month of her pregnancy.

There was widespread interest in the scandal in the tri-media—even though Hope's own "pregnancy" is "disputable and unlikely," according to a "Star Talk" staff member.

The INQUIRER had hoped to get an interview with the "woman of the hour."

Instead, she sent this text message in Filipino to a "Star Talk" staffer: "I'm sorry *po*. I've said everything I wanted to say last Sunday. I think I've also answered them (Kris and James)."

The staffer, who read the message to the INQUIRER, said that Hope was now reluctant to grant interviews because her parents had just arrived from the province.

Last weekend, despite the conflicting reports and unproven allegations, show biz talk shows on both GMA 7 and ABS-CBN zoomed in on the full-blown scandal.

Hope granted interviews with manager-entertainment columnist Lolit Solis on GMA 7's "Star Talk" on Saturday and "S-Files" on Sunday. Kris and James appeared on ABS-CBN's "The Buzz" and "Rated K," interviewed by broadcaster Korina Sanchez.

And the winner is

And the winner in the ratings game for the Sunday afternoon time slot is … "The Buzz," hosted by Boy Abunda and Kris Aquino, which posted a high 18.6 points.

According to Roxy Liquigan, supervising producer of "The Buzz," who sent the figures via SMS, their show had slightly more viewers in Mega Manila (Metro Manila and the suburbs) compared to "S-Files" which posted 17.3 points. "Rated K," which aired an hour after "The Buzz," posted a record 32 points in Mega Manila.

In Metro Manila, "The Buzz" (20.9) had a significantly higher lead over "S-Files" (16.0).

In the suburbs, "S-Files" (19.9) clobbered "The Buzz" (13.6).

These results were confirmed by Jayce C. Perlas, head of GMA 7's Entertainment Publicity.

Perlas said via SMS: "The competition had a 1.2 lead over 'S-Files.' 'Star Talk' (22.3), on the other hand, where Ms Centeno first appeared, had a lead ranging from a low of 7.2 to a high of 14.5 … [since] it was up against three programs: 'Nagmamahal Kapamilya,' 'Let's Go' and 'Star Magic Presents.'"

Rated love triangle

Kris blamed the network wars as the cause of her woes in an interview with Korina aired on Sunday.

"I am mad at the people who took advantage of the situation. Just because I am with the competition? How many times must they crucify me?" Kris said in Taglish.

Asked to comment on Kris' allegations, Butch Raquel, officer in charge of GMA 7's Corporate Communications, sent the INQUIRER this statement:

"We were quite surprised how the battle for ratings was cited as the root of all this. Ratings is an everyday affair for both networks. Like any woman scorned, Hope was crying out for understanding. She needed to air her side if only to relieve herself of the guilt and fear of being condemned. We only aired her story. We believe we handled it objectively."

Notes on a scandal

Filmmaker Jose Javier Reyes criticized local media's handling of the scandal: "Whether it's in the spirit of commercial competition or not is not the issue. The public display of amorality is disturbing. I think the country has more important problems that should be discussed on TV."

Although they are on rival shows, Lolit of "Star Talk" and Boy of "The Buzz" agreed that the network wars shouldn't be blamed.

"It's just a news story for me," Lolit told the INQUIRER last week.

"This has nothing to do with the network war," Boy concurred.

A "Star Talk" staffer had the same sentiments: "It's a valid story. If they were in our shoes and it was a GMA 7 talent who was caught in a controversy, [the staffers of] 'The Buzz' would've pursued the Hope interview, too."

Is she or isn't she?

The same staffer, however, candidly admitted that Hope's pregnancy was highly suspect. "I don't think she's pregnant, but I believe that something happened between her and James."

A GMA 7 insider said that the cell phone numbers Hope provided were definitely those of James'. They had also been verified.

"But we didn't air the graphic MMS photos and text messages that Hope supposedly has in her cell phone. Deciding what to air took hours of deliberation," the insider added.

An ABS-CBN source volunteered that the Korina interview with James and Kris was also "difficult. It wrapped up at 3 a.m."

Morality clause

The source added that "they had no choice but to put James in front of the camera because he was the main protagonist in this story."

With regard to the morality clause in the product endorsements of James, Dondon Monteverde said there was nothing to worry about—just yet.

"Nothing has been proven. Plus, in most of his contracts, there's no morality clause. Before we entered into his contracts, we were very open about things," said Monteverde, who is the manager of both James and Kris.

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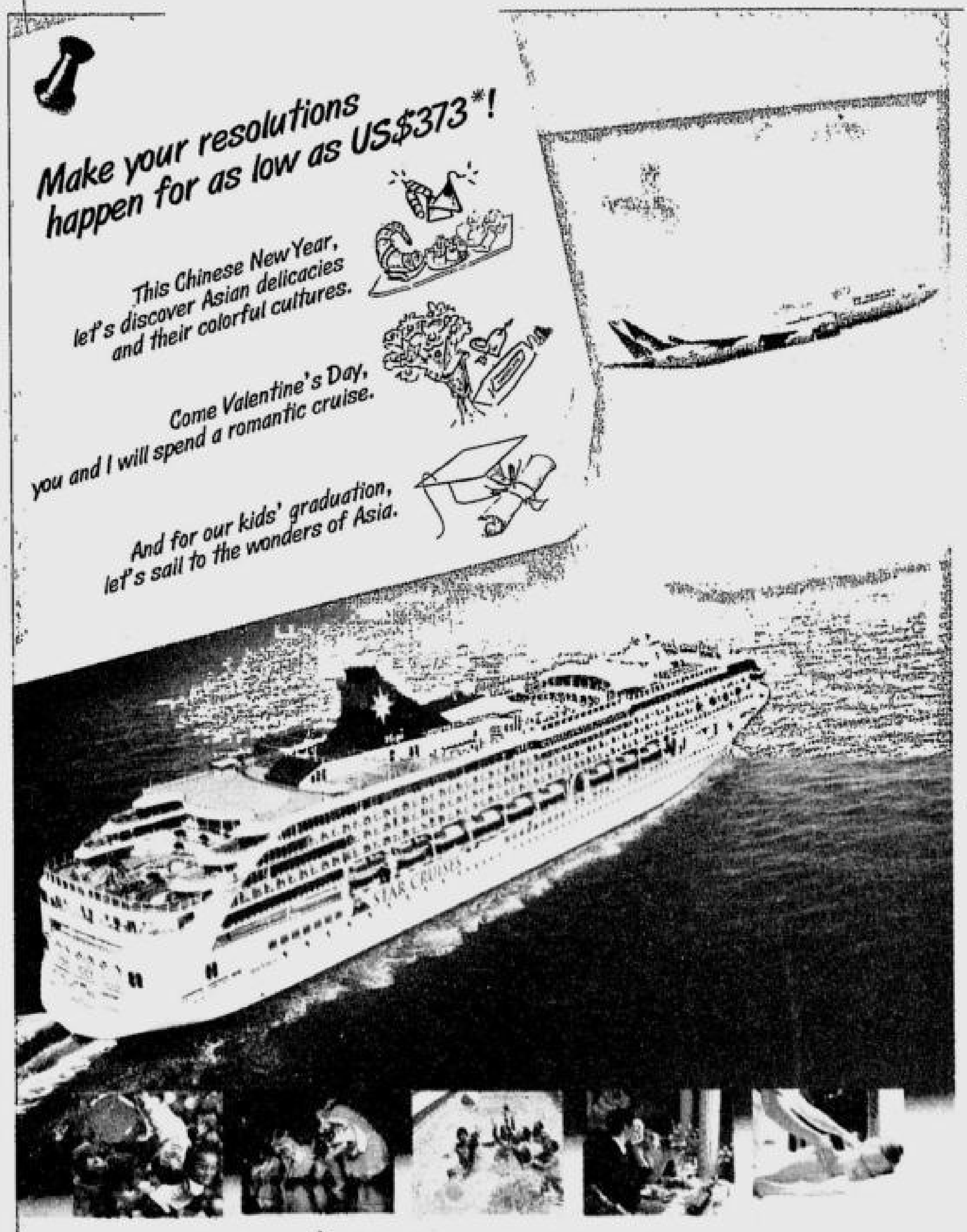
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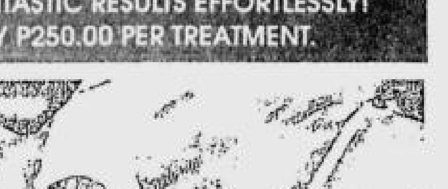

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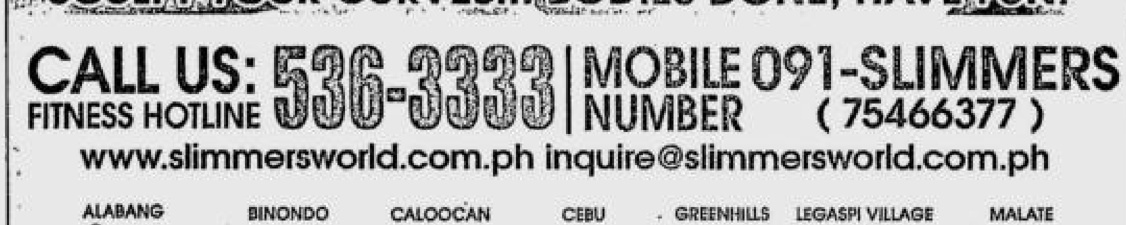

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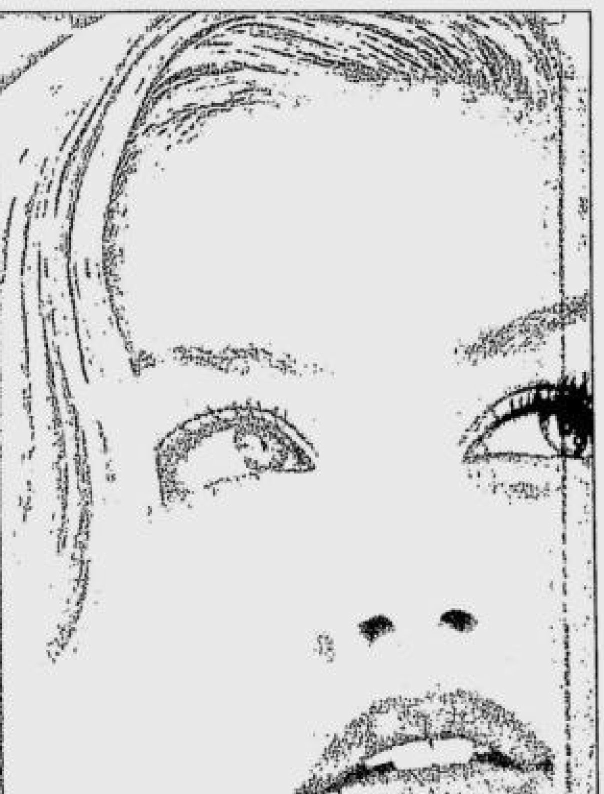

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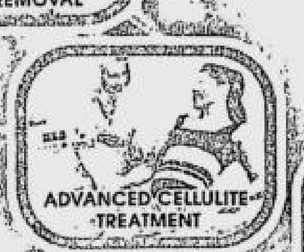

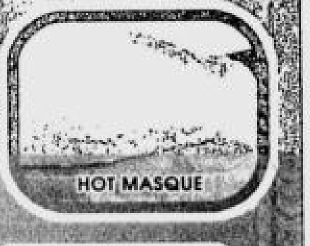

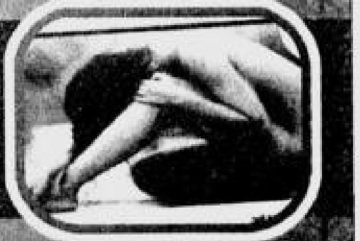

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13 Rangers hurt, 1 captured in clash ...

From page A1

schoolhouse as part of Balikatan.

Marine Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino reported the capture of the soldier during the encounter in the MNLF camp.

Earlier this month, the MNLF took Undersecretary Ramon Santos, Dolorfino and about 20 others hostage while on a peace mission on Jolo and detained them for two days until P350,000 in supposed compensation for earlier MNLF casualties was paid.

Dolorfino said he was dismayed by the turn of events. He said problems with the MNLF, which signed a peace agreement with the government in 1996, were still being resolved.

Dolorfino was tasked by Malacañang to continue ironing out the Sulu problem that has already displaced hundreds of people.

MEMBERS of the Moro National Liberation Front led by MNLF commander Ustadz Habier Malik pose for the INQUIRER photographer who visited their camp in Barangay Bitanag, Panamao, Sulu, early this month. REM ZAMORA

Confrontation being provoked

"I told him (Pabustan) not to believe reports that the MNLF was coddling Abu Sayyaf bandits. Somebody is trying to get the AFP to the MNLF and start a confrontation again," Dolorfino, who declined to elaborate further, said.

Dolorfino admitted that Abu Sayyaf bandits had sought refuge near MNLF camps.

"We fear that instead of the ASG, our soldiers might hit the MNLF rebels that were requested to move back," he said.

Dolorfino said a peace monitoring group had been established to prevent skirmishes between the military and the MNLF and that all it should take was proper communication so that "no one from these two sides will fire at each other."

The group is co-chaired by Al Mujahid Biao, MNLF's deputy commander for military affairs, and Col. Demetrio Ramon, deputy commander of Task Force Comet.

Escalation of violence feared

Dolorfino said he feared the violence would escalate.

Temojen Tulawie, Jolo councilor and human rights activist, told the INQUIRER that the recurring clashes between the military and the MNLF had displaced hundreds of people since Feb. 19.

"This [kind of] incident is becoming alarming. I just hope there are no innocent civilian casualties," Warina Jukuy, a member of the Concerned Citizens of Sulu, said.

Atilano Ade, regional disaster officer for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said he would proceed to Sulu to assess the situation. "I need to know the real score so we will know what to do in this situation," he said.

He said that based on the latest report they got, there were about 500 people displaced by the recurring violence.

"We are now doing some planning at Tabang Sulu office for the relief operation on Tuesday," Amilbahar Amilasan, the presidential assistant for Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi affairs, said.

Syd Benitez of the Citizens Disasters Response Network said clashes were preventing the nongovernment organization from delivering assistance to the evacuees.

Ustadz Zain Jali, spiritual adviser of MNLF chair Nur Misuari, said another ceasefire was reached on Sunday evening.

The ceasefire, Biao said, allowed the AFP to evacuate wounded soldiers.

US to complete projects

Maj. John Redfield, public affairs officer of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP), told the INQUIRER the clashes were far from where some 200 Americans engaged in construction were located.

"The security provided by the Armed Forces of the Philippines allows the work to continue," he said.

Redfield said that he was optimistic the projects would be completed before the end of Balikatan in March.

"We are a little more than halfway through with these humanitarian projects. And of course we are doing more and more every day to bring them to completion," Redfield said.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney also said the US forces would continue with their mission in Sulu.

"There are open fights there. US soldiers are not to be in combat and we aren't," she stressed. "We have great confidence in your armed forces in the Philippines and we feel very confident they are going to prevail."

Asked if US troops were providing intelligence reports, including satellite imaging, to Philippine troops in the battlefield, Kenney said that intelligence sharing was one area of cooperation.

"We share intelligence with Philippine troops. That's one of the ways we do support and I think that that's making a big difference. But it's the great Philippine soldiers who are in the frontline and they make all of us very proud," she added. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana in Manila*

OIC envoy coming next week

By Michael Lim Ubac

A TOP ENVOY OF THE INFLUENTIAL Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) will arrive this week in Manila to meet with the country's peace negotiators and finalize the agenda of the tripartite meeting next month in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Ambassador Sayid el-Masry, representing the OIC secretary general, is scheduled to arrive today and meet with presidential peace process adviser Jesus Dureza behind closed doors.

But Dureza received a call yesterday from the Egyptian Embassy that the OIC envoy might postpone his trip to a later date because he was sick. The information, however, had yet to be validated, he said.

The two are expected to finalize talking points in the March 17-18 meetings between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippine peace panel, and the OIC which brokered the talks.

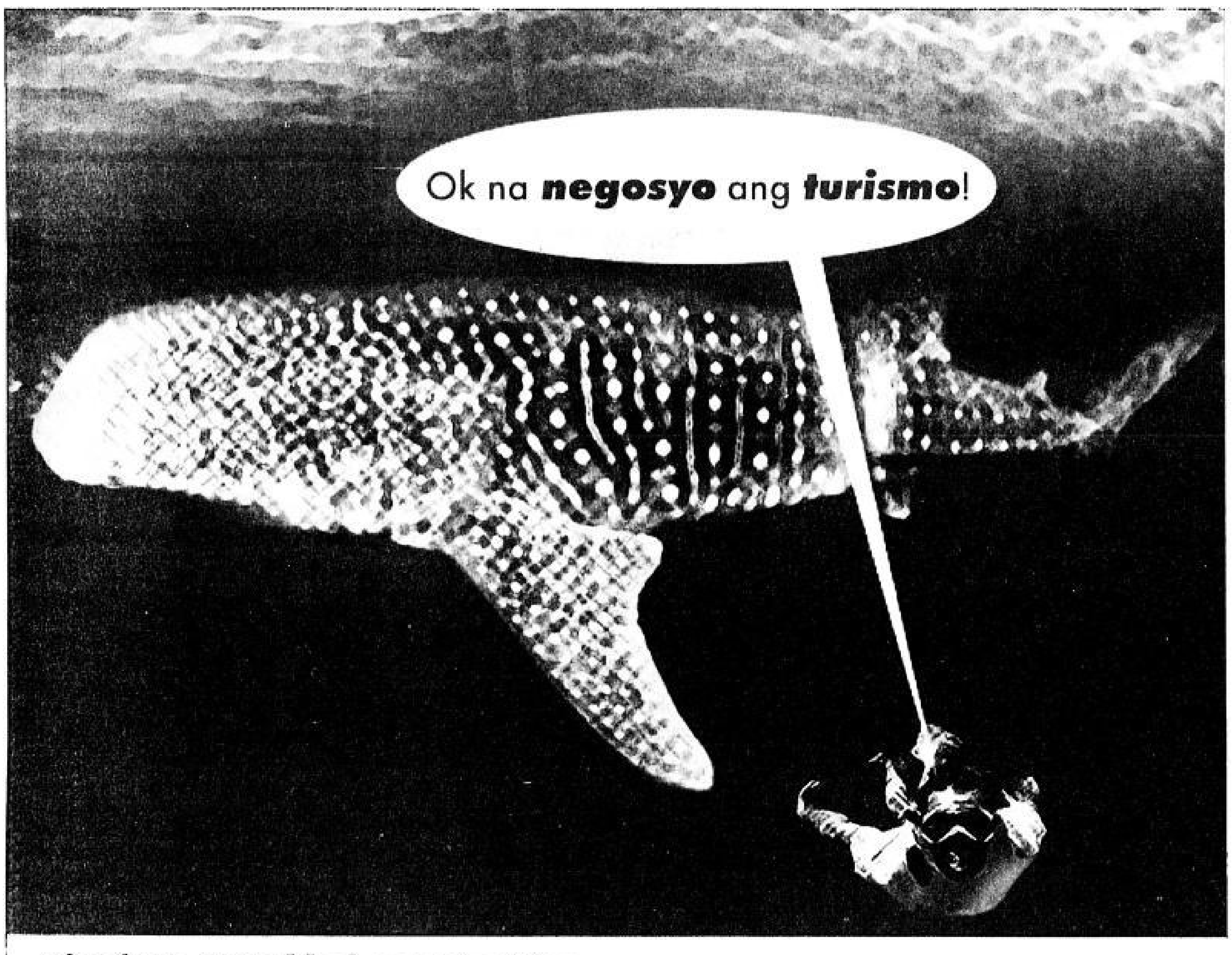
Dureza told the INQUIRER that the meeting was crucial to Manila's goal to end hostilities in the troubled South.

"We will discuss preliminary matters here in Manila," said Dureza, without elaborating.

But he said the focus of the Jeddah meeting would be a "review" of the implementation of the 1996 peace accord between the MNLF and the government inked during the Ramos administration.

Dureza was mum about the role to be played by detained MNLF leader Nur Misuari. "I can't comment on that since we have not talked yet with the OIC. It's a sensitive issue," said Dureza.

The MNLF has insisted that its erstwhile leader, Misuari, should head the Moro delegation.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Day 2 March 3, 2007
11:45 AM - **Cultural Presentations (Prelude to 4th Forum)** • 12:00 PM - **Awarding of Inspiring Tourism Entrepreneurs and Teenpreneur Winners** • 1:45 PM - **LGU Tour and Sightseeing by host** • 2:00 PM **FORUM 4: Tour Activities and Sightseeing: Leisure and pleasure at my fingertips** • 3:00 PM - **P500 Challenge with Ali Sotto** • 3:15 PM - **FORUM 5: OTOP: Shop 'til you drop** • 4:00 PM - **Testimony with Visuals: Medical Tourism in the Philippines** • 4:15 PM - **FORUM 6: Marketing and Tourism: Niches, trends, promotions and more opportunities** • 5:15 PM - **Cultural Presentation (by Bandang Kawayan)**
Day 3 March 4, 2007
1:45 PM - **Cultural Presentations** • 2:00 PM - **LGU Presentation** • 3:30 PM - **Sponsor A Presentation** • 4:00 PM - **Sponsor B Presentation** • 4:30 PM - **Sponsor C Presentation** • 5:00 PM - **Teenpreneur/GK Presentations**

FORUMS:
March 2 – Friday (1:30pm-6:00pm)
Fe Agudo (Hyundai)*, Ruelito Cayamanda (Association of Car Rental Companies)*, Felix Cruz (Board of Airline Representatives)*, Avelino Zapanta (Skal Club of Manila), Albert Abuy (Philippine Association of Tourist Transport Operators), Clang Garcia (Hop On Hop Off Tours), Philtranco, LTFRB, Rose Libongco (President of Hotel Sales and Marketing Association)*, Teresita Polo (Robuslan Home Stay in Sorsogon)*, Dir. Ma. Victoria Jasmin (Tourism Standards)*, Patrick Gregorio (Microtel)*, Vicky Wallace (Bohol Bee Farm), Patricia Lime (Hotel Federation), JM Tanalgo (Bacolod Chicken Inasal)*, Chef Bernard Dee (Guava), Gardie Gatchalian (Blue Gre Coffee), Chit Juan (Figaro), Laudette Dayrit (Le Cordon Bleu Manila), Antonio's Breakfast, Collette's Buko Pie, Eurobake, Shamrock, Longganisa Vigan, Bancon Bangus, Dr. Corazon Rodriguez (Asian Institute of Tourism)*, Ms. Lorraine Villanueva (Enderun), Edgar Castillo (Microfinance), Marinella Trinidad (Center for Culinary Arts), Sec. Augusto Syjuco (TESDA), Dir. Rhodora Leano (DTI BSMED) DOT representative
March 3 – Saturday (1:00pm-6:00pm)
Cathy Brillantes (Nature Spa)*, Anya Santos (Nanban)*, Salvador Adrao (Daanel Municipal Tourism)*, Jojo Clemente (PTAA)*, Gov. Lray Villafuerte (CamSur Water Sports Complex), Mayor Hernani Braganza (Hundred Islands), Anton Carag (Chico River Adventure) Dir. Warner Andrada or Dir. Allan Canizal (National Ecotourism Steering Comm.), Tita Padilla Diego (Balikbayan)*, Jay Aldeguer (Islands Souvenirs)*, Nardo Capuyan (Nardo's)*, Tesoro's, Pili Nut, DOT Usec. Oscar Palabyab*, Dir. Daniel Corpus*, Marisa Mallona (PACEOS)*, Dr. Allen Canizal (National Ecotourism Steering Comm.), Dean Evelyn Pantig, Don Jaime Zobel de Ayala, Lance Gokongwei, Henry Sy, Inspiring Awardees

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UN hits use of Pinoy ...

From page A1

of armed forces currently posted in Iraq, after the US military but ahead of the British troops, according to Jose Luis Gomez del Prado, the head of a United Nations workgroup on the use of mercenaries.

"At least 160 companies are operating in Iraq. They probably employ 35,000 to 40,000 people," Gomez del Prado said on the sidelines of a second workgroup session in Geneva last week.

More than 400 of these private employees have died in Iraq since 2003, putting their casualties below the number suffered by US armed forces but ahead of British military deaths, he said. "And a lot more have been injured."

The workgroup is scheduled to deliver a report to the UN Commission for Human Rights next month emphasizing concerns over mercenary recruitment methods used by US companies like Triple Canopy and Blackwater.

Many of the recruits stem from former police and military forces in the Philippines, Peru and Ecuador, according to the workgroup, which recently conducted missions to the latter two countries.

Unprepared for conflict

"They are trained quickly but not prepared for armed conflict situations," Gomez del Prado said.

"They are sent there, they receive M16 (assault rifles) and are placed in very dangerous areas like the Green Zone (in Baghdad), convoys and embassies," he added.

While the recruits sometimes carry out important and honorable tasks like protecting humanitarian organization convoys, they are also "in a situation where they can violate human rights because they are armed," according to the UN expert.

And while Americans and Europeans working in war zones for private security companies often make as much as $10,000 a month, Peruvians doing the same job seldom make more than $1,000, and their working rights are often violated, Gomez del Prado said.

Contracts unclear

"The contracts they sign often hide things that aren't clear. The original is in English, which most of them do not speak," he said.

The recruits are entitled to the labor rights applied in the country where the company hiring them is headquartered, but the UN expert pointed out that it is hard to imagine "a poor Peruvian filing suit in an American court."

The number of private security companies working in war zones like Iraq has exploded in recent years, with one private security employee for every four US soldiers currently stationed in Iraq.

That number is up from one private security guard for every 50 US soldiers who took part in the first Gulf war in 1990-91, Gomez del Prado said.

Legal vacuum

He is alarmed at the legal vacuum in which these companies operate, pointing out that their activities are not actually covered by the strict definition of mercenaries given in the 1989 International Convention against the Use, Recruitment, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, signed by 28 countries.

"It's a bit like the difference between the privateers and the pirates in the old days," he said.

In addition to war zones, Gomez del Prado expressed alarm at the presence of private security company employees around mining sites, where "they violate the ecological and social rights of communities trying to defend their land or the environment against pollution." *AFP*

IN THE KNOW

NUMBER OF FILIPINO MERCENARIES in Iraq: 3,000, according to a June 2006 press release from Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.'s office.

(In a 2006 report, journalist Ellen Tordesillas said there were 25,000 armed personnel in Iraq working for private military contractors.)

Private Military Contractors recruiting Filipinos:

- Blackwater USA, the largest mercenary outfit in the world.
- Dyncorp, a technology and services company based in Reston, Virginia.
- Erynis International, founded by pro-apartheid South African officials.
- Triple Canopy Training

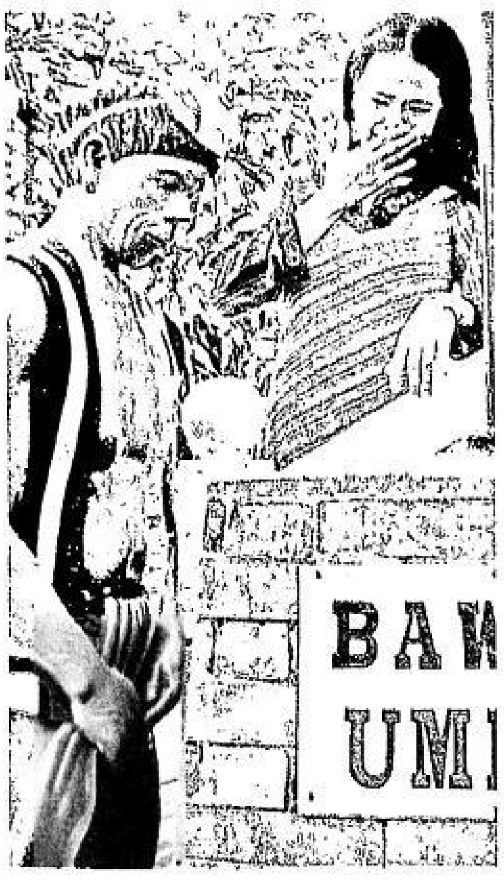
Blackwater recruits and conducts practice firing at the Clark Special Economic Zone on weekends. (Sunstar report)

Blackwater president Gary Jackson reportedly said last year that the company acquired about 2 hectares in Subic as a training area.

Related information:

Tordesillas said there are two kinds of mercenaries in Iraq. The "static" personnel, or those who guard American offices and facilities, get from $1,700 to $3,000 a month. Those in the Personal Security Detail, people who guard officials and escort deliveries of supplies, get as much as $12,000 a month. ***Compiled by Inquirer Research***

'Pissing' statue causes uproar



THIS STATUE of a "pissing" Igorot posted on the website YouTube.com has US-based Igorots up in arms. The statue has been on display outside a Baguio restaurant for years, but it never received any complaints until it ended up on the Web last week.

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—A website which has posted the video of a man in a G-string urinating against a wall has pissed off Igorots based in the United States.

Never mind if the man that appears to be relieving himself is only a statue.

US-based Igorots have been sending messages of outrage to Philippine officials after discovering the video on the Web. They even wrote Commissioner Eugenio Insigne of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples on Feb. 22.

The controversial statue can be found outside a restaurant on Upper Session Road, although it cannot be seen from the road.

Beside it is a signboard which reads: "*Bawal umihi dito* (Urinating here is prohibited)."

Asked to comment on the now infamous statue, restaurant employees said they were unaware that the image had drawn so much flak.

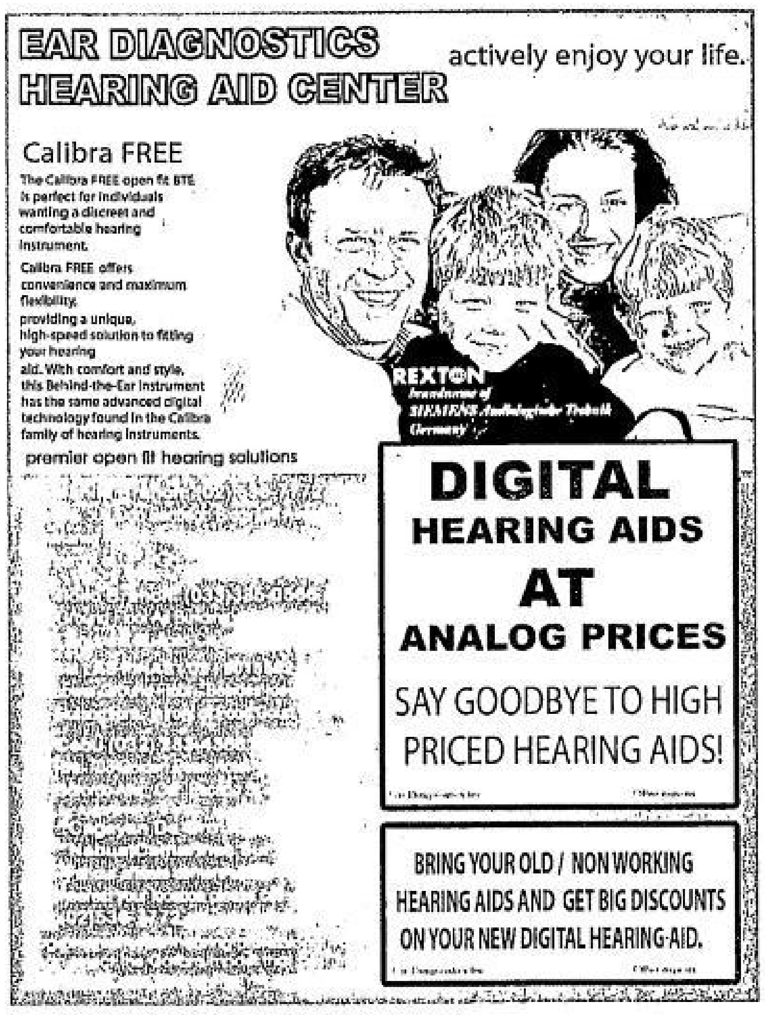
The food establishment has attracted crowds of tourists because of its wide collection of statues of Igorot men and women. It also features life-size statues of former President Corazon Aquino and the late Jaime Cardinal Sin.

The video clip of the statue, however, has inspired foreign-based Igorots to write indignant letters from abroad.

Bill Billig wrote: "Rather than passing inconsequential ordinances like forcing businesses to have English signs, it is things like this that the Baguio City council should be looking into.

"My God, this restaurant is in Baguio which used to be the domain of the Ibalois and which still has a significant number of Igorot residents, and the owners of this restaurant are apparently getting away with this?" he continued.

"Are we going to allow this restaurant to piss on us in our own backyard? Maybe we should all go to that restaurant and collectively pee at its doorstep in protest," Bilig said.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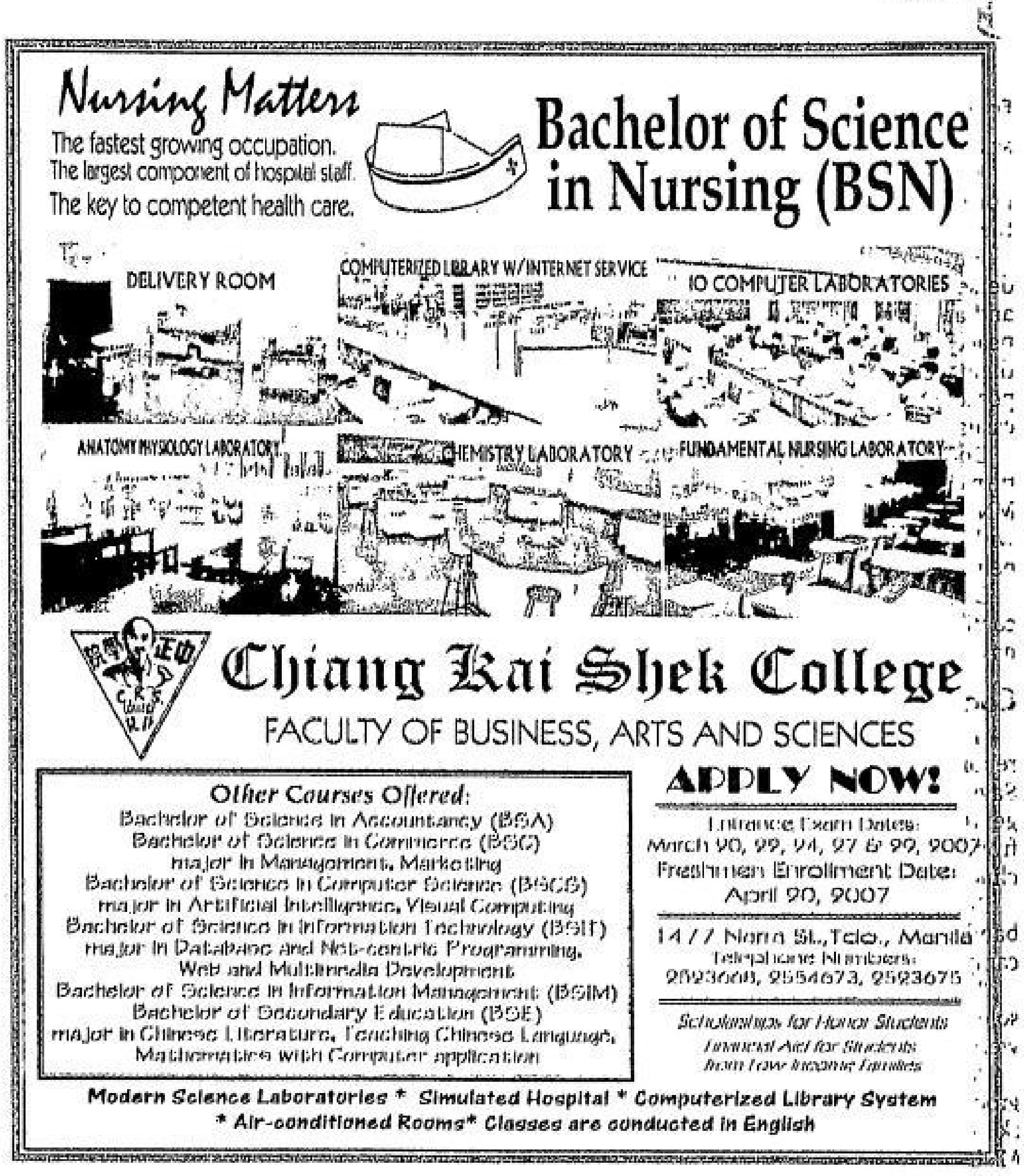
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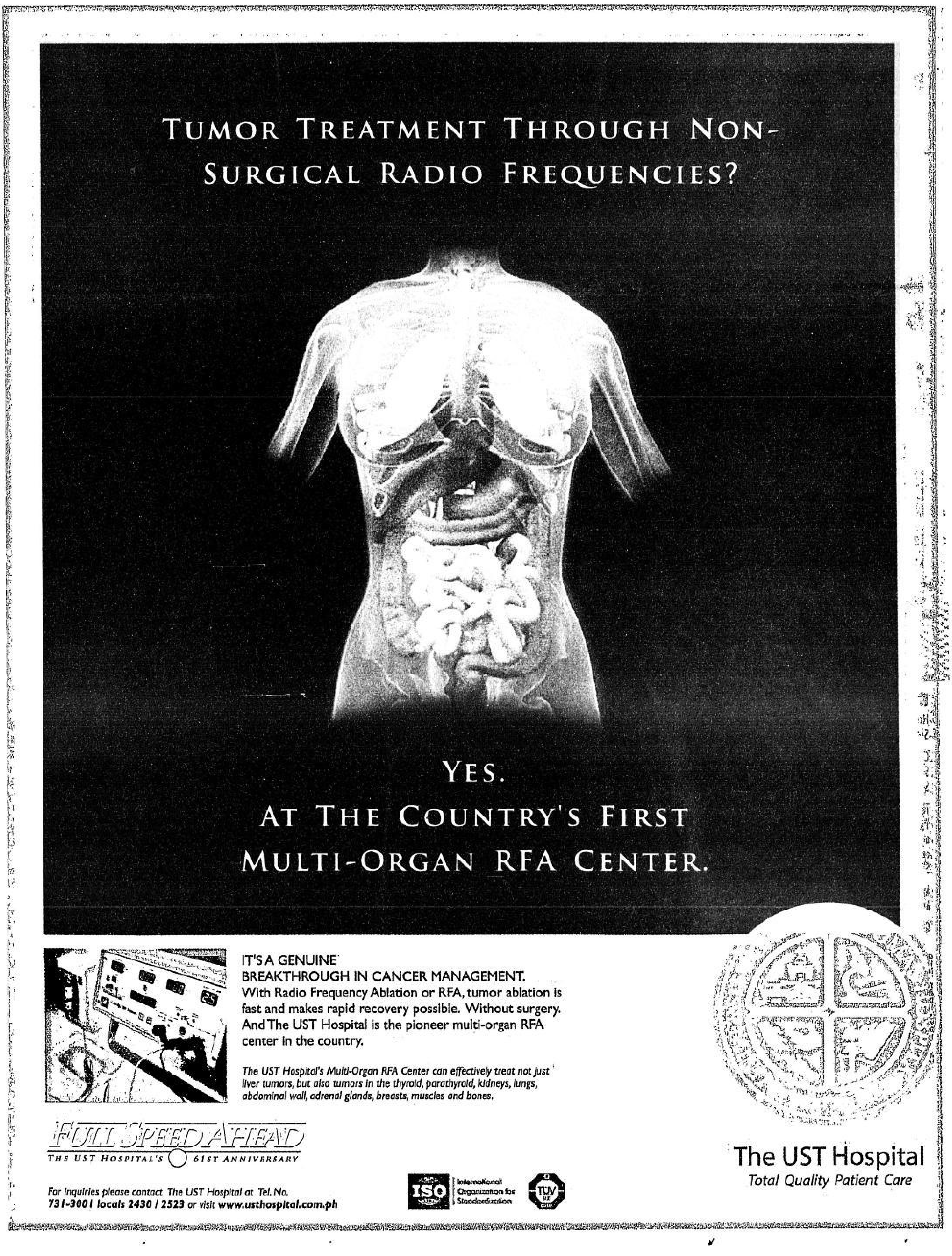
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US urges end to extrajudicial killings

From page A1

that is a democracy."

She added: "I think the important thing now is the government of the Philippines has put together some very good ideas. Let's get them into action."

She said: "Let's ... make every effort to indeed investigate, prosecute those responsible, exonerate the innocent."

The human rights situation in the Philippines again came under international focus in the wake of the recent visit to the country of United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston to look into the incidents, and the release of the Melo Commission report on the killings allegedly perpetrated by assassins linked to the military.

Top priority

In her first public statement since the release of the Melo findings, Ms Arroyo said: "I have made it a top priority to resolve the killings of political and agrarian activists and of members of the media and to prevent further killings."

"I am confident that we are on the right course," she added.

Ms Arroyo said her administration had taken immediate steps toward solving the "important issue of extrajudicial killings of activists and media."

Her orders included:

- Appointing Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol to monitor the progress of her directives.
- Directing the Department of Justice to enhance the Witness Protection Program (WPP).
- Directing the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to delve deeper into the killings.
- Directing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Department of National Defense to come up with an updated document on command responsibility.

Special courts

Ms Arroyo also cited her proposal to the Supreme Court to establish special courts and for the Department of Foreign Affairs to request technical assistance from the European Union and other independent bodies for the investigation of the killings.

Chief Justice Reynato Puno said two weeks ago that the high court would set up the special courts "as soon as possible."

On her directive to the DOJ to strengthen the WPP, Ms Arroyo said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez "has liberalized admission requirements particularly when the threat level on bona fide witnesses is high."

Proactive stance

Regional state prosecutors have been authorized to "grant provisional coverage to high risk witnesses under threat" pending confirmation of their admission to the program, she said.

She said Gonzalez had also directed all WPP implementors and personnel, particularly the regional state prosecutors, city and provincial prosecutors, "to adopt a proactive stance in seeking out bona fide witnesses in cases involving political killings, media murders and human rights violations."

Ms Arroyo said the DOJ had organized a team of prosecutors "to oversee, coordinate and follow up" all cases involving witnesses at high risk, for expeditious prosecution of cases.

Regarding the doctrine of command responsibility—cited by the Melo report in blaming retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan for some of the killings—Ms Arroyo said she had ordered the DND and AFP to "come up as soon as possible with an updated document on command responsibility."

She noted that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon on Feb. 4 issued a memorandum ordering strict adherence to the doctrine of command responsibility.

Commander's accountability

"One of the points stressed by Justice Jose Melo, chairman of the Melo Commission, is the need to ensure that all military officers understand and correctly implement the doctrine of command responsibility," she said.

She added: "Command responsibility refers to the accountability or responsibility or answerability of the commander of a military force or unit for the acts of his men, inclusive of the authority to order, to direct, to prevent or control the acts of his men."

Ms Arroyo reminded soldiers that under Executive Order No. 226 issued in 2005, "commanders are duty-bound to closely monitor, supervise, direct, coordinate and control the overall activities of his subordinates and to submit an offender to the proper authorities."

State may be liable

The many-sided Melo report said that one of the conclusions of the commission was that "there is no direct evidence, but only circumstantial evidence, linking some elements in the military to the killings."

It also said that overall, "There is no official or sanctioned policy on the part of the military or its civilian superiors to resort to what other euphemistically call 'alternative procedures'—meaning illegal liquidation."

But the commission also suggested that the "whip must be cracked to bring the rogue military elements back in line."

"The military should not be allowed to descend to the level of insurgents and rebels themselves with their lawless, treacherous methodologies," it said, stressing that the AFP was "not a state within a state."

The report also said that the government could not "sit idly by and refuse to act."

"Ultimately, the State has the responsibility of protecting its citizens and making sure that their fundamental liberties are respected," it said.

The commission drew attention to a growing worldwide consensus for state responsibility for non-state acts.

"T[his] posits that if the State fails to investigate, prosecute or redress private, non-state acts in violation of fundamental liberties, it is in effect aiding the perpetrators of such violations, for which it could be held responsible under international law," it said. *With a report from AFP*

GO now 'officially eleven'; Kiko Pangilinan out

From page A1

"I understand, accept and respect the decision of GO. I hope they also understand my decision. I was ready for whatever decision made by GO because I was not really an official member of their senatorial slate," he said in a statement.

Cause of confusion

He noted that he was invited only as a guest candidate. "In all humility, I was prepared to run as an independent and as an official candidate of the Liberal Party. In my opinion, my being an adopted candidate of GO would only continue to cause confusion in the public's mind about my platform and the platform of GO," he said.

In a text message to the INQUIRER, he said the matter settled once and for all the issue of his status.

He said he remained ready to reach out to GO candidates and those from other groups who "will defend the independence of the Senate."

Strike together

"To paraphrase the term coined by a known ideologue, we can march separately yet on selected issues strike together," he said.

Pangilinan, a member of the Liberal Party faction led by Sen. Franklin Drilon, did not attend the opposition proclamation rally on Saturday.

Pangilinan was elected in 2001 under the Arroyo administration's senatorial ticket along with fellow Wednesday Group members Senators Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto and Manuel Villar.

The Wednesday Group is composed of then neophyte senators elected in 2001. The group included Vice President Noli de Castro who ran as an independent for the Senate that year.

Arroyo and Recto have chosen to run under the administration senatorial slate although the Wednesday Group criticized Ms Arroyo for requiring officials to get her clearance before attending congressional inquiries, and other acts that allegedly undermined the Senate's authority.

Awkward

Villar, the Senate president and Nacionalista Party leader, is the other member of the Wednesday Group in the opposition slate.

Pangilinan had said that he would find it awkward to be with the administration senatorial candidates because he had called for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation.

He felt the same way toward GO as he had also called for deposed President Joseph Estrada's resignation in 2001.

He became a candidate of GO partly because of the LP-Drilon wing's membership in the United Opposition.

Tamano said that GO leaders at the meeting yesterday did not decide what to do with Pangilinan even as the 90-day senatorial campaign entered its third week.

Repercussions

Tamano said not everyone in the opposition's executive committee was in agreement about Pangilinan's exclusion from the slate.

He said some of the leaders were wary of the repercussions.

"The Liberal Party is one of the coalition members. This is something we must consider," Tamano said.

Aside from Pangilinan, another GO senatorial candidate, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, belongs to the LP faction under Drilon.

Clarify status

Election lawyer Romulo Macalintal said Pangilinan should clarify his being an "independent" senatorial candidate so that the voters would not be confused.

"He is independent only in the sense that he does not want to be identified with the administration or the opposition groupings," Macalintal said.

Under the election law, independent candidates are those not nominated by any registered political party.

Macalintal pointed out that Pangilinan was nominated by the Drilon-wing of the Liberal Party.

Because Pangilinan is an LP nominee, he may not spend more than P3 for every voter during the campaign, in accordance with the law, according to Macalintal.

Independent candidates, under the law, are allowed to spend up to P5 per voter.

"To claim to be an independent would also affect one's party standing," Macalintal said. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Jerome Aning*

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo challenges lawyer: Wanna fight?

From page A1

called the First Gentleman.

But the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo exhibited such behavior yesterday while he was on the witness stand for a libel case he filed against a newspaper.

Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, who is officially called the First Gentleman, invited the defense lawyer to settle the matter outside the courtroom during a heated exchange.

A shouting match ensued between Arroyo and lawyer Paul Arias in the trial of Arroyo's libel case against the newspaper Malaya at the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Cross-examination

Arias blew his top when Arroyo started raising his voice during cross-examination.

The defense lawyer shouted back and said to Judge Rosario Cruz of Branch 173 that the "witness cannot shout at counsel."

Arroyo replied to Arias and said, "If you want, we can settle this outside," to which Arias replied, "I will oblige the witness, Your Honor. I move for a recess."

Suit against 43 journalists

Judge Cruz then pacified the two, saying they should all act properly. Arroyo, who is also a lawyer, apologized to the judge.

It was Arroyo's first time to testify in his P11-million libel suit against Amado Macasaet, Malaya publisher and chair of the editorial board, and Rosario Galang, business editor.

The President's husband has filed libel cases against a total of 44 journalists, including 10 columnists, editors and writers of the INQUIRER. The most recent case was filed against the INQUIRER on Tuesday at the chief prosecutor's office.

The libel suit against the INQUIRER stemmed from an article published nearly a year ago that claimed that he flew to Mindanao to bribe election officials to manipulate the 2004 election results.

Treatment for cancer

Arroyo filed the case against Malaya on April 7, 2006, claiming that Macasaet's column, "Business Circuit," which ran the story titled "First Couple's idea of charity," was maliciously written.

The article claimed that Arroyo and the President denied financial help to a Presidential Security Group's (PSG) sister, who was undergoing treatment for brain cancer.

The column said an executive assistant of the First Gentleman promised P100,000 to Freddie Juno's sister, Rowena, for her cancer treatment.

It further said that the money never came, and that Rowena's case was instead referred to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Rowena was said to be spending P50,000 a day at V. Luna Medical Center, a government hospital for soldiers.

Another call was supposedly made to the Office of the President, and the "caller" was told "they had no money" and to go to the PCSO.

Macasaet also said in his column that "politicians were the most charitable people on this planet while they are campaigning."

The column was published two months after the 2004 presidential election.

Unverified

In his complaint, Arroyo said the source of the story was not cited and its information was unverified.

In his testimony, the President's husband said that the FG Foundation handled 12 charities and that he did charity work even if it were not part of his duties as First Gentleman.

Arias and private prosecutor Ruy Rondain also had their share of heated exchanges during the trial.

Several times, Rondain questioned Arias about his line of questioning, to which Arias replied "Let me finish first."

Rondain said it was the first time heated exchanges occurred during a trial of the libel cases filed by Arroyo. Everyone, nevertheless, shook hands afterward.

Rondain is handling 15 of the First Gentleman's libel cases.

Arroyo's testimony began at 9:30 a.m. and ended at around noon.

He will take the witness stand again on March 19.

Retake test, Palace tells 2006 nurses

From page A1

with no other option but to comply with the CGFNS' decision—which is for them to retake the equivalent of the scandal-tainted Tests III and V of last year's board exam so that they could get a VisaScreen certificate, a requirement for entry to the US.

"It's up to them. It's their option. They want to go to the States as nurses, they must get the visa (screen certificates) and for them to get that visa they should take the exam and pass the exam. Otherwise, they can work somewhere else," Apostol said in an interview with reporters.

Apostol said there was no need for the government to appeal the Feb. 15 decision of the CGFNS.

"We are fond of (seeking) reconsideration, we are fond of that. But that is a rule in the States. If you want to go to the States, you follow their rule. If you do not want, never mind," Apostol said.

A task force led by PRC Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero had planned to go to the United States to appeal the CGFNS' decision.

But CGFNS chief executive officer Barbara Nichols told Rosero on Saturday that the appeal would be futile because the decision was final.

"During the conversation, Nichols assured Rosero the CGFNS was fully aware of and concerned about how its decision might affect the June 2006 passers. Nichols noted, however, that the decision was final, and "no useful purpose would be served by Rosero coming to the United States to make an appeal of that decision," the CGFNS said on its website.

No appeal

The CGFNS website said the decision was made by its board of trustees.

"There is no process or provision for an appeal or reconsideration of a Board decision. There is no higher authority than the Board of Trustees," Nichols told Rosero, according to the website.

Asked if Malacañang would abide by the CGFNS' statement its decision was final, Apostol said: "Yes. Isn't it that the Palace has said 'Take the exam if you want to go the US?'" Apostol said.

Apostol said Labor Secretary Arturo Brion need not submit a draft order to Malacañang ordering a retake of the leak-tainted portions of the June 2006 board exam.

'CGFNS has spoken'

"Why is there a need for an EO (executive order?) All he has to do is give the necessary (directive) to the PRC. Talk with the PRC and set the date for the examination," Apostol said.

Ang, head of the presidential task force which worked for the designation of the Philippines as a testing site for the CGFNS, said he was not optimistic an appeal would change the CGFNS decision.

"The CGFNS has spoken. Maybe we can make an appeal to demonstrate our sympathy for the 17,000 nurses (who passed the 2006 exam). Maybe there's nothing wrong if the (task force) travels to the US (to make an appeal). But we should not give false hopes to our nurses given the statement of the CGFNS," Ang said.

Ang had been batting for a retake of the exam which was tainted by the leak of test questions in the cities of Manila and Baguio.

DOJ reopens probe

The Department of Justice has, meanwhile, reopened the preliminary investigation into the alleged leakage of questions.

Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon said the reopening was done upon the request of the PRC, which sought to include, as part of the evidence, the notes taken by a student during review classes at Pentagon Review Specialist.

Pentagon was one of three review centers implicated in the leakage of questions, along with R.A. Gapuz Review Center Inc. and Inress Review Centers Inc.

The respondents were accused of violating the Act Modernizing the Professional Regulation Commission, for allegedly providing the answers to the reviewees they handled.

Fadullon said that yesterday was supposed to be the deadline for the submission of the parties' memoranda, or the summaries of their arguments during the preliminary investigation and the points they want to raise, after which the case would be deemed submitted for resolution.

Additional evidence

The PRC yesterday also moved to reopen the investigation to include additional evidence involving Pentagon, and the DOJ granted the commission's motion.

"The reopening was limited to the acceptance of the notes taken during the review at Pentagon," Fadullon said.

The DOJ also gave the respondents from Pentagon time to submit their comment.

Fadullon reset for March 9 the deadline for the submission of the parties' memoranda.

"We want to resolve the case at the soonest possible time," he said. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

Left with no choice

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT WOULD MEAN A LOT OF work again. But left with no choice, 20-year-old nurse Cherry Ann is willing to retake the exams she believed she had honestly passed.

She had long been setting her eyes on working in the United States, where she said she would find "bigger opportunities."

But she has been jobless since she passed the controversial licensure exam in June 2006. To get some experience, she just volunteered to work in a government hospital in Pangasinan for several months.

"There is nothing more we can do. They want us to retake the exams. So we will have to retake the exams," she told the INQUIRER yesterday, while applying for a temporary job at a private hospital in Baguio City.

The US Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools has decided not to accept Filipino nurses who took the leakage-marred licensure exam, unless they retake portions of the test.

Philippine Nursing Association president Leah Primitiva Samaco-Paquiz said yesterday she and other PNA officials met with PRC chair Leonor Rosero on Sunday to talk about the task group's next move.

Rosero refused to provide details of the meeting, saying the PRC would release a statement.

"We will just let them (passers) decide (if they will retake or not). We will be there to support them whatever their decision would be," Paquiz told the INQUIRER.

The Alliance of New Nurses, which had opposed the proposed retake of Tests III (medical-surgical nursing) and V (psychiatric nursing), yesterday said it would leave the decision to the passers.

"That will be the option of the passers," alliance president Renato Aquino said, also refusing to say if he himself would retake the exams.

Aquino said he and four other nurses planned to meet with CGFNS officials next week. But not to appeal the decision.

"We respect their decision. We just want to find out what really happened so this problem will not happen again," Aquino said.

Atienza: Manny out of race; Pacquiao: Maybe, maybe not

By Allison W. Lopez

BOXING SUPERSTAR Manny Pacquiao has decided to drop out of the political race, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said yesterday.

Pacquiao, scheduled to fight the unbeaten Jorge Solis of Mexico (32-0) on April 14 in Texas, had announced he would run for the congressional seat in South Cotabato currently held by reelectionist Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio.

But, without refuting Atienza's claim, Pacquiao yesterday refused to make a categorical statement on his political plans.

"I'm not saying I'm not running, but I cannot talk about my final plans at the moment," Pacquiao told GMA News last night.

He said he had to concentrate on his next fight more than anything else.

"The final filing of candidacy is on March 29, my fight is on April 14. I'm not saying I'm not running," he told GMA's Mel Tiangco to whom Pacquiao had earlier confirmed he would be joining the political race.

But Atienza, a close ally and known adviser of the national boxing hero, said it would be back to the boxing ring for Pacquiao, voted the world's best boxer in 2006.

Atienza, who had spent time with Pacquiao at ringside when they watched the "Moment of Truth" card at the Cebu Sports Complex on Saturday, said he had spoken to the famous fighter about his "quandary and obligations in politics."

"I'm happy with his decision to set aside politics so he can concentrate on his boxing career and focus on his next fight," said Atienza in a phone interview.

Atienza said he explained to Manny "what will be good for the country" and that "politics and boxing do not mix."

He added he had never prevented anyone from entering politics before, and that when Pacquiao was in Cebu and someone asked him about politics, Manny himself changed the topic and said they should "focus on his next fight."

"He is a patriotic and God-fearing man… but he is at his peak in boxing, so politics can wait," Atienza said. "At the moment *hindi siya tatakbo (He won't run)*. But whatever he decides, I will support him."

"That's very good news, Cebuanos would be very happy," international promoter Rex "Wakee" Salud, a close friend of Pacquiao's, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Salud said the boos Pacquiao received when he walked into the vast boxing venue in Cebu on Saturday could be a manifestation of the fans' disapproval of his political plans.

Pacquiao is scheduled to fly to the US on March 5 to train for his match against Solis, but there were rumors he might postpone his departure and spend more time training in Manila.

Explain docu, Comelec orders Cesar Montano

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION on Elections wants administration senatorial candidate Cesar Montano and a cable channel to explain the recent airing of a TV documentary, which could be a violation of the Fair Election Act.

"There is an order for [senatorial] candidate Cesar Montano and the studio responsible for the showing of the [TV documentary] to explain and show cause why they should not be cited for having violated the Fair Election Act," Comelec chair, Benjamin Abalos Sr., said in a press conference yesterday.

Candidates face disqualification if it is proved they had violated the Fair Election Act.

A Comelec resolution also provides that a candidate or registered political parties seeking national elective positions are given 120 minutes of air time on free TV and cable TV and 180 minutes on radio, whether by purchase or donation, for their broadcast advertisements or election propaganda.

Abalos received reports that last week, a cable channel, reportedly the Living Asia Channel, aired an old Edsa Revolution documentary hosted by Montano, an actor.

Abalos said that not even the movies of actors seeking elective posts could be aired during the campaign period.

Section 6, paragraph 8 of the Fair Election Act explicitly states: "No movie, cinematograph or documentary portrayed by an actor or media personality who is himself a candidate shall likewise be publicly exhibited in a theater or any public forum during the campaign period."

However, the upcoming fight of boxing champ Manny Pacquiao in April is a different matter altogether.

Unlike the Montano documentary, Abalos said Pacquiao's fight, which would be aired live, is "a current event of national interest."

However, Abalos advised the TV network that would be airing Pacquiao's April 14 fight against Mexican boxer, Jorge Solis, to send the Comelec an "outline" of the program to ensure that there would be no violation of the law.

Report suspicious cops, says PNP chief

By Alcuin Papa

IF YOU ARE FLAGGED down by policemen, make sure they are in proper uniform. Otherwise, drive to the nearest police station and report them.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon issued the advice to the public yesterday after the PNP busted a kidnap-for-ransom gang composed of rogue policemen and civilians preying on foreigners over the weekend.

Calderon said the gang's modus operandi included flagging down would-be victims, presenting credentials as law enforcers and "arresting" the victims on the pretext there were warrants out for their arrest.

"There are a lot of posers on the loose. Specifically those who say they are conducting checkpoints now that it is election time," Calderon told reporters yesterday.

The PNP chief said policemen manning checkpoints should be in proper uniform, the checkpoints should have the proper signs from the Commission on Elections and the PNP and these should be in well-lit areas.

If one has any doubts about a checkpoint, Calderon said the public should seek assistance at the nearest police station.

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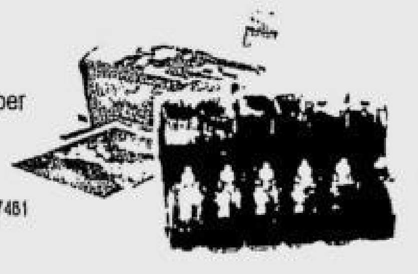

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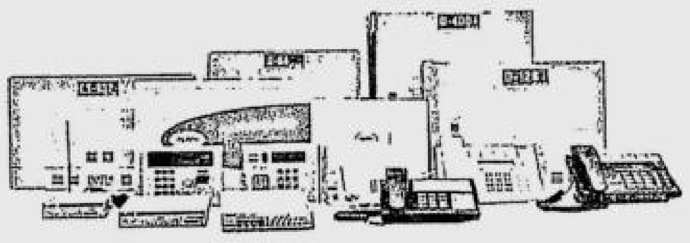

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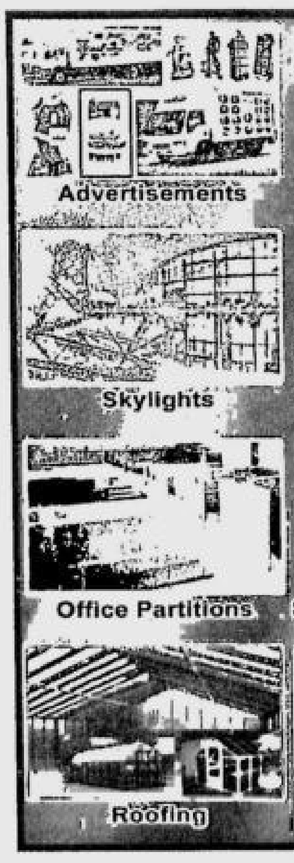

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Circus

Editorial

"CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN," AN INQUIRER HEADLINE said several days ago. And truly, the triennial circus known as the electoral campaign and the elections has started and will draw the attention of young and old alike in the next two-and-a-half months. The people are in for a lot of entertainment in what is supposed to be a very serious activity, one that may well decide the direction in which the nation will go in the next three years.

The usual circus characters are here. There are the Acrobats, or to use the more colorful French term, the Saltimbanques, who will be jumping, flipping and flopping from place to place. They include the Men and Women of the Flying Trapeze, who have simply amazed us with the quickness and dexterity with which they have swung from one extreme to the other, from opposition to administration, or vice versa, as dictated by their personal, family and political interests.

There are the High-Wire Artists who try to keep a balancing act between taking a pro-administration stand and an opposition stance, in the hope of winning votes from both camps. Or leaders who do not openly declare support for any of two or more contending candidates in a province or city.

There are the Contortionists, who have gone through tortuous twists and turns trying to justify their jumping from one group to another or from one party to another.

There are the Magicians and Illusionists, who can make losing candidates win and winning candidates lose. They are experts in the new political mathematics and in the manipulation of vote tallies.

There are the Freaks like the Bearded Woman or (political) Giants and (political) Pygmies. Mostly pygmies, intellectual dwarves who believe that they have the competence and the traits required of the high political offices that they seek.

There are the Clowns and the Comedians who will, once they are elected, become silent, non-performing assets in legislative assemblies and practically become part of the furniture and décor of the chambers that they will occupy.

There are the Barkers, the public relations and advertising practitioners, the spinmeisters who try to make their clients as attractive as possible so that the circus goers (the voters) will enter the circus and watch their acts (vote for them and put them in positions of authority).

These are some of the characters of the three-ring circus that are entertaining us with their dances, songs, comedy acts and skits during the electoral campaign. Most of the voters will be entertained and amused by them, and some will vote for them on the basis of their popularity, physical attributes and name recall. The more discerning will vote on the basis of their competence, qualities and traits. The voters will cheer them, shake their hands; some will even hug and kiss them. But in the end, unless this year's voters are any different from those in previous election years, the winning candidates, some of whom may not deserve to occupy any elective position, will have the last laugh on us.

Show biz

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS TRULY BECOME one big show-biz event. In the past, particularly before martial law, issues were widely discussed in rallies, in the papers, over the radio and on television. Now, there is just a lot of froth and frippery—dances, songs, skits, comedy acts, etc.—in rallies and on the candidates' TV ads. Rarely is there an intelligent discussion of the issues and the competence and traits of candidates.

The media have the obligation to elevate the political dialogue between candidates and voters in the current electoral campaign. In the recent Media Nation 4.1 conference in Clark, some journalists said the media do not have the duty to "educate" voters. But by merely giving voters the necessary information on which to base their decisions and choices, the media are actually "educating" them.

The media can elevate the level of the electoral campaign by identifying the major issues and making the candidates discuss them; by running voters' guides, including matrices showing the stand of the candidates on various problems and issues; and even doing something as basic as telling voters what the duties and functions of a senator, a congressman, a governor or a mayor are. The media have to help their readers, listeners and viewers understand their community and the choices that they face in the coming elections. An important event like the elections has to be treated and reported more seriously and carefully.

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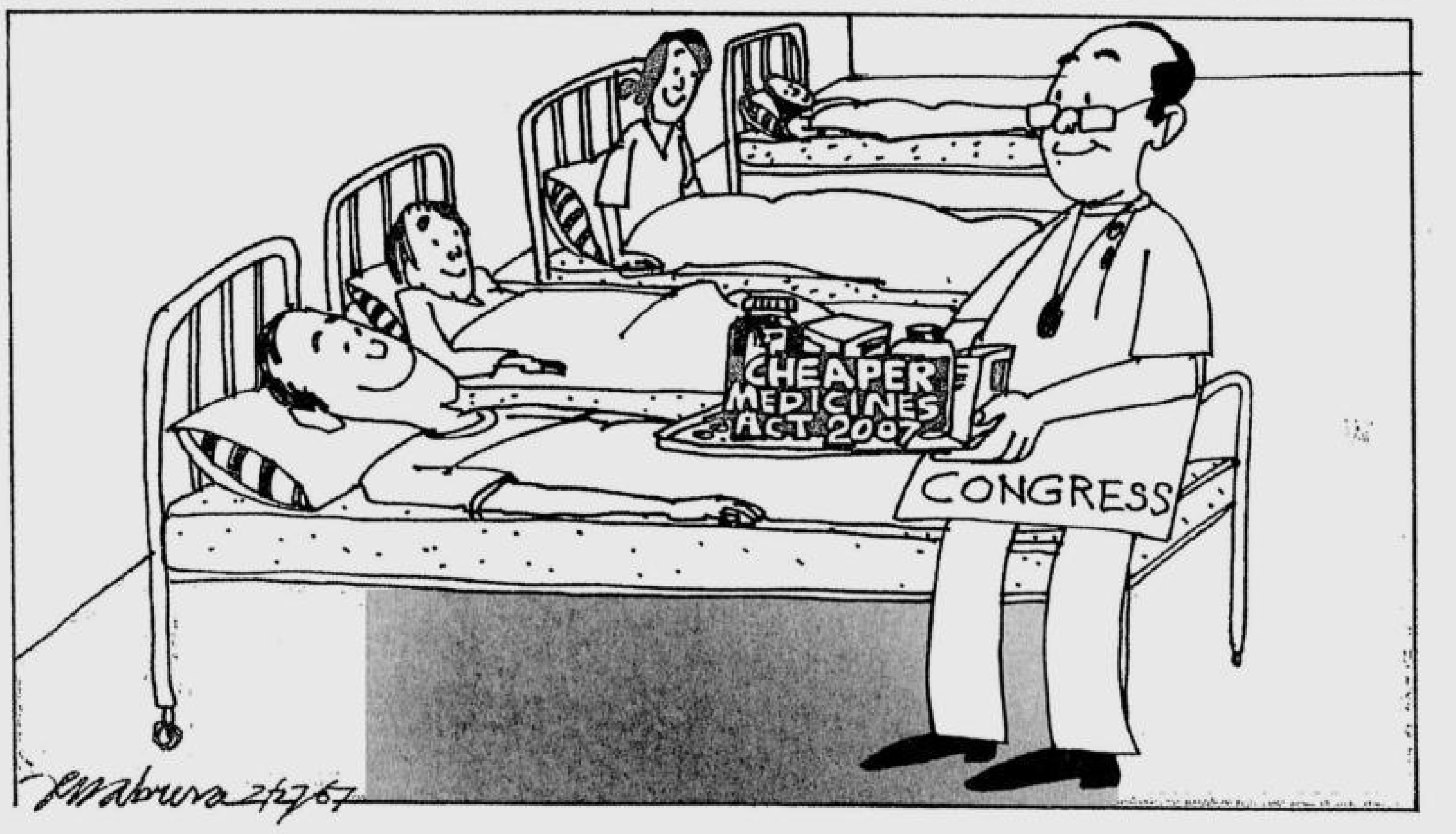

Swap or stew?

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

GIDDY FROM ELECTION SYNDROME, CEBU finds that its most bandied-about word today comes from Scotland of 1555: "blackmail." That's tribute exacted by freebooting warlords in exchange for immunity from pillage.

"Blackmail," snapped the provincial government, after the city council, dominated by Mayor Tomas Osmeña, approved a resolution that ordered a freeze on clearances for the Capitol to develop on a 2.8-hectare lot a modern city-within-a-city to be known as "Ciudad," unless Gov. Gwen Garcia swapped a P3.2-billion provincial lot for a city plot worth P415 million. That is to protect his 5,000 constituents, the mayor said. Otherwise, Ciudad clearances could take a decade. Deal or no deal?

This swap-or-stew offer is "blackmail," Provincial Board Member Victor Maambong erupted. "Ciudad is unrelated to the land swap. To use it as leverage is unfair."

But fairness isn't a priority for City Hall, which is hemorrhaging from P1.5-million daily interest payment for Osmeña's "imploding" yen loans. A "value-for-value" swap, as the provincial government suggests, would financially "dislocate us," the mayor argued.

It probably would. Osmeña wangled a P1.9-billion loan for reclamation from Tokyo, when a dollar fetched P26. Serial devaluations ballooned that IOU to P6.3 billion. Every city resident today is handcuffed to a debt burden of P60,654, compared to P44,548 for each of the 85 million Filipinos.

Nothing rattles the business sector more than when merit-based rules are hostaged "in exchange for immunity from pillage" by political whim.

But "there're no standards," even for Cebu City charter honorees, Osmeña explains. "I pick whoever is meritorious." Thus, he anointed his close-in security cop, garlanded with murder charges, as charter co-honoree with the President of the Philippines. "It's a question of dosage," he said of the criteria in judging, not Viagra, but 172 summary executions by vigilantes.

The city council long swapped the duty to question policy for comfortable subservience, the Sun Star noted. "This is a harem of eunuchs."

So, did Osmeña expect the lady governor also to cave in to swap-or-stew threats?

"Watch me," Garcia replied. For a start, she: (a) reminded City Hall that the province owned the landmark Fuente Osmeña; (b) issued eviction notices to offices occupying province-owned properties, from the Cebu City Police Office to the Center for Rehabilitation of Drug Dependents; (c) closed two access roads carved from provincial lots.

"We'll open those roads under Local Government Code powers," Osmeña fumed. The mayor has got a point there. The courts, in fact, whacked him for barricading a road his city did not own: the national government's six-lane, 12-km South Coastal Road. The almost half-year barricade burned millions in lost revenue, gas, time and tempers for thousands of commuters. "I didn't close that road but merely regulated it," Osmeña claimed after the court ordered his barricades dismantled.

Why not relocate affected occupants of the 296-hectare South Reclamation project? multi-awarded dySS commentator Bobby Nalzaro suggested. "We don't want hostile tenants" was the curt reply. City Hall will fight for the embattled families to the last square meter—of somebody else's property.

In a land brawl, however, a Torrens title is the trump card. And the governor played it early. "I'll make it easier for the mayor. He does not have to give up property or go down on bended knees (as he offered). I'll directly deal with the 2,725 affected occupants. The lot swap does not need to go on… End of story."

That surgically excised Osmeña out of the negotiations. "The decision was like manna," he said.

Well, not quite. This is a long-term problem where major factors are subtle. Smell the demographics: Migrants swell Cebu's population at twice national rates. That ratchets pressure for an urban policy that swap-or-stew governance hasn't crafted.

A sprawling metropolis, like Cebu, needs leaders of vision and whittled-down egos to mesh efforts. The Capitol is flexing property and treasury muscle after stagnation under former Gov. Pablo Garcia, the incumbent's father. Cebu City is hamstrung by debt and feudal governance. Leaders of varying integrity and competence govern the next-door cities of Talisay, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu. Without exception, they have sour relations with Osmeña.

The "quiet revolution" in governance is for local governments to trim sails, stop doles and harness the private sector in partnership models, the Asian Development Bank notes. "The powerful desire of the poor to acquire and use assets, to improve their well-being and reduce their vulnerability" can be a powerful force to move beyond 19th century municipal structures.

"When elephants fight, the grass is trampled." So, cooler heads, like Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar, quietly grope for solutions. Swap is out. But "as a sign of good faith," the governor pledged to stop evictions while Capitol negotiates with the occupants.

He'd complain to the President about eviction notices for national offices, Osmeña said. Are they not occupying "friar land" owned by national government? She can even flip-flop and reverse her certification, which enabled Congress to approve Rep. Raul del Mar's House Bill 4993, which recognized titles of private owners to former friar lands.

"This is transparency," Osmeña claims, "not blackmail." There's that Scottish word again. Or is this just recycled swap-or-stew?

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Liabilities

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

BUT OF COURSE SHE'S LIABLE.

Instead of complaining loudly about the Melo report, the government should be greeting it with mild, if not wild, celebrations. It doesn't hold the commander in chief, GMA, directly responsible for the killings, only Jovito Palparan and few "bad eggs" in the military. That is like tagging the gaggle of Visayans who dragged Ninoy Aquino out of the plane and started shouting "Pusila! Pusila!" as the true authors of his murder.

In fact, GMA isn't just liable for the killings, she is responsible for them.

At the very least, that is so by the principle of command responsibility. That was reaffirmed not too long ago in the class suit filed by the martial law torture victims against Marcos. American Judge Manuel Real found Marcos guilty of the torture, "salvaging," (summary executions) and disappearances, notwithstanding that he did not explicitly order them because he created the situation that made them inevitable. His ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeals of Pasadena, California, who cited the case of Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita.

The charge against Yamashita was "permitting (his subordinates) to commit extensive and widespread atrocities." He was found guilty on the grounds that: one, he knew about the atrocities; two, he was in a position to stop them; and three, he did not stop them. That was the case with Marcos, too, the court ruled.

And that is the case with GMA.

Does she know about the atrocities? How can she not? International journalists' and human rights groups have been vociferously damning the massacre of journalists and political activists for many years. A couple of years ago, the US Committee to Protect Journalists already classified the Philippines as the second most dangerous country in the world for journalists next only to Iraq. Reporters Sans Frontières had the perfect phrase for the routine murders: "a culture of impunity." What is patent for journalists is even more so for political activists. You don't know that even student activists are being abducted and made to disappear, you should not be president, you should be a member of the band that plays at the Duty Free Shop at Parañaque. But I am insulting the blind.

Is she in a position to stop them? Of course. The generals are her appointees—indeed she has rotated them faster than they can finish their songs in their favorite karaoke bar. All she has to do is issue a presidential order proscribing extrajudicial measures and prescribing stiff penalties for any military officer found committing them. All she has to do is say that should any harm come to the witnesses who come out to accuse the culprits, heads would roll—and they would not be those of the witnesses. But all she has done is issue a presidential order proscribing any attempt by a government official to say anything against her without her consent and prescribing court martial for any military official that does. That order, quite incidentally, has been obeyed religiously by government officials, notwithstanding that the Supreme Court has ruled against it, which must show that she can stop the atrocities if she wants to.

Does she want to? No.

That brings us from tacit agreement to active encouragement, from command responsibility to willing participation. Palparan's atrocities and justification for them are not unknown to anyone living in this country. He has not hidden them from public view, he has trumpeted them. He would later admit to the Melo Commission that he said: "My order to my soldiers is that if they are certain that there are armed rebels in the house or yard, shoot them. It will just be too bad if civilians are killed in the process… Sorry *na lang kung may nadamay na* civilian. The death of civilians and local officials are small sacrifices brought about by the anti-insurgency campaign."

GMA not only did not relieve him for this frame of mind, she singled him out for special commendation in her State of the Nation Address. Along with all the *trapos* who killed the effort to impeach her for stealing the vote.

But still more than that, there is the war that GMA has unleashed against the Reds, which is as criminal—and cynical—a war as you can get. What's wrong with it isn't just its boasts about accomplishing its goal in a record two years, though that by itself guarantees a scale of mayhem that rivals that of martial law. As Philip Alston suggested when Raul Gonzalez boasted again about wiping out the enemy before you could say "idiot," what did he propose to do, kill everyone?

What's wrong with that war is that war itself. At least when Marcos (and later Cory) unleashed the sword of war against the insurgents, the insurgents were a threat to the country. Today, they are a spent force, lacking arms, lacking a flood of recruits, lacking an ideology that could attract the youth, lacking moral superiority (specifically because of the "killing fields"), lacking numbers.

The only purpose GMA's war against them serves is to save GMA, not the country. That war turns public attention away from the real threat to the country, which is an illegitimate government, by trotting out the Reds as the bogeyman, the way Hitler trotted out the Jews in his time. Additionally, it strengthens the "Hello Garci" generals in the military by giving them the power to hound "subversives," quite literally on pain of death, while neutralizing the rebellious junior officers who have been asking what in God's, or GMA's, name they are doing fighting (and killing) folk who, like them, have been driven to arms by poverty and injustice. It's a cynical war—with criminal consequences.

I don't know which is worse: killing people with vicious intent or making sure one lives even if others die to make it so.

Forget the triggermen, indict the mastermind.

Flowering of Edsa-inspired projects

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EVERY YEAR, LAMENTATION IS THE USUAL companion of the celebration of the Edsa People Power Revolt. This year, former President Fidel V. Ramos, in his speech at Libingan ng Mga Bayani, said: "Regretfully, the predominant view is that Edsa was no big deal," and the event seems to be fading "into the fog of history."

With all due respect to FVR, I liken Edsa to an anniversary commemoration for a dear departed. In the years following the death of my parents several decades ago, we children would gather together to celebrate their birthdays and even their wedding anniversary, prompting my sister-in-law, the redoubtable Ninez Cacho-Olivares, to complain, "*Sobra naman kayo.* What's the point in celebrating when the celebrants are no longer here?" But over the years we slowly stopped doing so and today we remember our parents in our own individual ways. But this doesn't mean that their legacy is dead. I would like to think that we celebrate it by seeking to live our lives as close to what they taught us.

* * *

The same is true of Edsa. Fewer and fewer people go to Edsa every February, but it remains within the hearts of those who were there during those memorable four days. Hopefully the Edsa People Power Commission will keep educating the youth who were not even born then about what it truly stands for.

Last Sunday, Feb. 25, Cecile Alvarez and I reminisced about Edsa over dzRH with Butz Aquino and Joey Lina, and we noted how all the details remained so vivid in our minds after 21 years. More importantly, as President Arroyo noted at the Edsa celebration, many fruits of the compassion and sharing that it aroused in us Filipinos are now flowering, like Gawad Kalinga and Pondong Pinoy. Another is the Alay sa Kawal Foundation that a group of us professionals launched in August 1987, as a direct response to the reconciliation at Edsa between civilians and the reformed military. Recently there's also the project launched by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, McDonald's Charities Foundation and IBM Philippines, "Share Mo, Time Mo," which is making a registry of volunteers on disaster risk management and response.

* * *

One reason my husband and I were happy to join a small Filipino group in Taiwan the other weekend was that we wanted to see the newly renovated National Palace Museum (NPM) in Taipei. It's often said that the main reason China wants to recapture its renegade province is this museum, which houses the best and choicest of the 1,000-year-old art collection of China's emperors. Beijing and Shanghai are said to have nothing compared to the treasures in its vaults.

We were able to visit NPM six years ago when we joined Speaker Jose de Venecia and his wife Gina for the inauguration of a new Buddhist temple. But last Feb. 19 was truly special. Two-thirds of NPM has undergone renovation over four years and only re-opened last Christmas Day for a three-month exhibition (until March 25) of its rarest works, understatedly titled the "Grand View." Since we only had an afternoon, Sonny Alvarez and we headed straight for NPM's most valuable and fragile art pieces, the extremely rare "Ju Ware" porcelains from the northern and southern Sung dynasties (960 to 1279), and their paintings, calligraphy and rare books. Ju porcelains are celebrated for their subtle sky-blue glaze made from ground-up agate, a semi-precious quartz, in a technique that has never been rediscovered since that time. There are only 70 Ju pieces in existence and the NPM displays its entire collection of 21 pieces, as well as 29 others borrowed from around the world.

The renovations include new lighting, air-conditioning and climate-controlled storage vaults, and explanations to the artworks now written in good English, as well as Japanese and Chinese. The NPM has also been ushered into the electronic age, and the kids enjoy touching some keys of computer screens which bring them into various dynasties. "We wanted it to be a little more up-to-date, a little humorous even," the 33-year-old Taiwanese-born, Australian-educated architect and renovation designer, Jimmy Yang, told the media.

* * *

The NPM's history is as colorful as its contents. It was established in Beijing in October 1925, shortly after the expulsion from the Forbidden City of Pu Yi, China's last emperor, and opened to the public for the first time in an effort to democratize what used to be exclusively for the imperial family's viewing pleasure. In the 1930s and 1940s, the museum pieces were moved from place to place to prevent them from falling into the hands of the invading Japanese Army. During the final years of the Chinese Civil War between the communist and nationalist forces, they were moved in thousands of crates, on orders of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, from Beijing's Forbidden City to various places in southern China. When the fall of China to the Communists looked inevitable in the late 1940s, thousands of crates of art pieces were shipped out reportedly in 13 boats to the Taiwanese port of Keelung. However, about 700 were left behind during the Nationalists' hasty withdrawal, and these became the core of the Beijing Museum.

* * *

In Taipei, the crates were stored for several years in caves dug into the mountains, as the Nationalists concentrated on plans to retake the mainland. But that wasn't feasible, and by 1965, the "temporary" NPM opened its doors in Taipei.

It's said that "miraculously, in the 32 years the collection was shuttled from Beijing to Taipei, not a single piece was broken." But the act of shipping it to Taiwan remains mired in controversy, with the mainland viewing it as "looting" of the best pieces of Chinese art, while the Taiwanese argue that they were simply "protecting" them, as they would have been destroyed by the rampaging Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution.

That's the politics of it, but lovers of Chinese art are only too glad that they're intact and now marvelously redisplayed for the whole world to appreciate.

What a way to celebrate Edsa

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHAT A WAY TO CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY of an event that changed the nation!

First, President Macapagal-Arroyo, herself a beneficiary of a replication of the Edsa People Power Revolt, asks the nation to observe the event by vowing never to embark on a similar exercise again. Saying another display of "People Power" would merely derail the economic gains her administration has achieved, she warned that "the world will not tolerate another Edsa" and instead condemn the Philippines if people mass on the streets again.

We all know where she's coming from, of course. If ever "People Power" does materialize in this country again, it will probably result in her ouster. She has come this close to it time and again, and it is only a matter of luck that, due to various factors, the "tipping point" to a re-staging of Edsa has not been reached.

Still, wasn't it rather crass of her to discredit the very event that led to her ascension to power? Would she have said the same thing in 2001 when, due to the massing of People Power incensed by the goings-on at the impeachment trial of President Erap, she found herself prematurely thrust into power? A little gratitude would seem to be in order, and some acknowledgement, at least, of the value of People Power, and the lessons those events taught us but which, sadly, we have failed to learn or take to heart.

And if Edsa Uno was such a big deal, then why should there not be—depending on your historical valuation—an Edsa Tres, Cuatro, Cinco and so on down the line?

A President, who is confident of her mandate, secure in her place in history, clean of conscience and knowing she owes no one, least of all the people, an apology, has no reason to fear a re-enactment of Edsa.

* * *

IT is difficult, from this remove, to recall exactly those days and nights of February 1986. Not so much the events themselves, as there are enough written records, photos and videos to bring those days back to life. But can we summon again the memories—the feelings, thoughts, fears, hopes and moods—that we who lived through those days experienced and wallowed in?

It might seem futile, even foolish, to revive the ghosts of Edsa when its very spirit has these days been mocked and trashed. That's what I thought last year, when, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the People Power revolt, the celebrations, already muted in the first place, were further marginalized by the sudden and unjustified declaration of a state of emergency. I'm sure the irony was not lost on anyone that on the day we were celebrating the power of the people to win freedom from dictatorship and defend their human rights, the state chose to trample upon those very rights and deny the public their peaceful and orderly exercise.

It seems even more frustrating now, given the current political situation and the seeming drift in our nation's morals, conscience and principles. Just take a look at the composition of the senatorial line-ups of both the administration and opposition. Boundaries that once seemed clear and unassailable are being breached with impunity and, worse, hypocrisy.

* * *

IT'S certainly indicative of the cheapening of the Spirit of Edsa that senatorial candidates chose to show up, not at the commemoration rites of the first Edsa revolt, but at Panagbenga, the Baguio Flower Festival, which drew much bigger and livelier crowds than the tired, lackluster Edsa rites. And thank goodness, there wasn't a big crowd because the President had made it clear that she was sick and tired of the event.

An even clearer indication of the waning of public interest in the memories of Edsa is that the subject of most everyone's conversation the past few days was not the historical turning point of Edsa, but rather the love triangle involving Kris, James and Hope.

There is, it must be pointed out, a tangential relationship between Edsa and this putative love triangle, if love indeed it is. Kris Aquino is, of course, the daughter of Ninoy Aquino, the man whose martyrdom inspired the three years of protests and action that culminated in the Edsa People Power Revolt. Kris' fame, while very much the fruit of her own hard work and natural charisma, is also a consequence of the publicity generated by her father's assassination, and the natural wave of sympathy that washed upon Ninoy's family, his daughter included. And I am sure it was not her intention to upstage the commemoration of Edsa by the very public and very painful airing of her latest heartbreak.

* * *

BUT there you are. Does the current obsessive focus on the tangled web woven by Kris, her husband and his uhmm, weekly fling, tell us something about how short and ungrateful is the public memory?

Maybe it's only Kris and James' celebrity that explains this disjointed sympathy and interest. Or perhaps the passage of time has dulled the drama and the anger that led to those events 21 years ago. But even today, in the scheme of things, the Edsa Revolt far outweighs in significance this wrinkle in the Yap-Aquino union.

All we need is some perspective, and a reviving of the original spirit of civic involvement and resolve never again to let our rights be trampled. But how can we do this, when the principal sponsor of the commemorative rites herself wishes we would just forget about Edsa and never be tempted to try it again?

What a way to celebrate Edsa! *"Hindi ka nag-iisa* (You are not alone)" is a message now meant not for Ninoy but for his daughter, who can't seem to shake off the public's prurient interest in the ups and downs of her love life.

Pipol Power

COMMENTARY

Jocelyn Yraola Dorado

THIS MONTH, WE COMMEMORATE THE 21ST anniversary of the most profound affirmation of Filipino solidarity for freedom and democracy: People Power. The 1986 non-violent mass action toppled a dictatorial regime that forced us to dance to its rigid martial beat for 14 years.

On the avenue presciently named "Epifanio de los Santos" (Epiphany of the Saints), the dictator's military force in complete battle gear was immobilized by the multitude of praying *kababayan* with peace offerings of food, water and flowers. Weapons of steel and iron were made inutile by rosary beads and religious icons. Like a climactic pas de deux, the despot fled and flew into the arms of his waltz partner, the US of A. On Edsa where they kept vigil for days and nights, the triumphant people celebrated their newly regained freedom with a huge fiesta of thanksgiving Masses, food, drinks and, naturally, songs and dances.

People Power after all is the culmination of a series of massive protest actions such as the simultaneous noise barrage on the eve of the Batasang Pambansa elections (1978), Ninoy Aquino's wake and funeral (1983), the Tarlac to Tarmac Run (1984), the people's yellow campaign rallies and the vigilance to guard their ballots, from the voting precincts to the halls of the Batasan, during the snap presidential elections, and, subsequently, Cory's call for civil disobedience in protest of election fraud. Like an ember rekindled to its blazing glory, the people were roused from stupor by the noise barrage, found strength and courage in each other in their shared mourning of Ninoy's death with "Di Ka Nag-iisa" and strongly manifested their desire to end years of oppression with "Sobra Na, Tama Na, Palitan Na!"

Twenty-one years later, we continue the struggle begun by our forefathers toward the end of the 19th century in fighting for our freedom and in building one sovereign and democratic nation.

Twenty-one years later, another set of numbers makes the papers' headlines as frequent as the lotto results: extrajudicial killings of activists, media practitioners, lawyers, public officials and religious workers. Despite this bleak scenario we will not despair and give up hope. Already the world has stirred. International human rights bodies have conducted fact-finding visits. European nations have sent GMA notice, albeit within the bounds of diplomacy.

Twenty-one years later, amid the pain and glory of our quest for true nationhood, we remain steadfast in keeping the flame of People Power alive within each of us.

We must rediscover ourselves by peeling off layer upon layer of labels that make up our present public image, and find our true selves.

In this context, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's Education Revolution provides us with a fresh perspective for social change. Everyone knows that the individual's quality of life is directly related to the quality of education he or she acquired during his formative years.

With focus on sustained community involvement for education reform, the Education Revolution makes perfect sense. Its People Power character is undeniable.

A paradigm shift at this phase of our nationhood is essential if we are to achieve unity and peace. Cultural anthropologist Dr. Edilberto N. Alegre asserts that we have never been colonized by either Spain or the United States since Spanish and English have never become our lingua franca. We merely incorporated foreign words in our languages and made them our own.

We probe deeper beneath the layers of foreign influences and ideas and we surely will discover the core of our being Filipino. No, we don't even have to probe. Our eyes are just temporarily blinded by the glare of the foreign. We just pause and become at peace for a while and look, listen and feel—Pinoy.

Twenty-one years later, we need to look inside ourselves again and harness our intrinsic values of *pakikiramay, bayanihan* and spirituality. People Power is Pipol Power. *Yan ang lakas ng Pinoy.*

Jocelyn Yraola Dorado is a pioneer and board member of the Runggiyan Social Development Foundation Inc. (RSDF), a non-government organization based in Tacloban City and serving Leyte and Samar. The foundation aims for women and youth empowerment through reproductive health services, alternative basic education and entrepreneurial development. It accepts donations for its programs and projects: the Women Support Center which provides counseling and legal assistance for VAW survivors, Educational Assistance/Scholarship for Former Child Laborers, and, the Home Study Program for Working & Out of School Youth. For more information, contact Paulina Lawsin-Nayra, executive director, at 63 (053) 523-5903, email: runggiyan@evis.net.ph or visit its website: www.evis.net.ph/~runggiyan/

Miles away

YOUNG BLOOD

Belen Docena-Asuelo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

NOW THAT IT'S LOVE MONTH, I CAN'T HELP BUT SORELY miss my husband. He is my number one fan, friend, critic, confidant, soulmate, townmate, all rolled into one. And he is miles away from me.

I am not alone with my battle against loneliness. My three girls (ages 9, 8 and 6) who are all their Papa's girls have not yet adjusted to the fact that he is physically away from us. No amount of telephone calls can still the girls' queries on when we are going to be with their Papa again. They miss him terribly.

He left with a heavy heart for the land of milk and honey last Dec. 29, 2006. It's the first time he has been away after 10 years of marriage. The scene at the airport with my husband and the kids was far more melodramatic and touching than any episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya" or "Magpakailanman." To say that a river of tears from my kids flowed at the airport's entrance is an understatement. The children kept on waving at their teary-eyed father until he was out of sight.

Tears could not stop my husband's departure. He had tried to postpone it by requesting the agency to reschedule his flight, but after many postponements the inevitable came, and he had to go.

I thought the drama at the airport would be enough. But on the way home, the kids couldn't mumble clear words as their father made his last call before boarding his plane.

Things didn't improve when we arrived home. They immediately looked for things that would remind them of their Papa and or simply stared blankly at the wall.

To this day, his presence is missed at dinnertime and bedtime. My middle child, who used to sleep beside him, tried to feel his presence by placing beside her pillow one of the clean shirts he left behind. But she complained that she could not smell her Papa in the newly washed working shirt he left.

With my husband gone, we had our loneliest media noche last Christmas. We were all quiet on the table even if we had the usual array of sumptuous foods. Nothing could make up for his absence. One of my daughters, unable to control herself, said in tears that she should have been with her Papa.

Until now, she often repeats that wish. Sometimes I would find her holding a picture of him, as tears roll down her angelic face.

You can't blame my kids for loving their Papa so dearly. He was always sensitive to their needs. He couldn't come home without something they loved to munch. My girls did not run out of Dunkin Donuts. It didn't matter if he was short on cash, he would bring without fail something for the kids.

He also couldn't leave home without cooking for the girls their favorite *champorado* with Milo. He couldn't sleep without putting medication on the kids' skin. He was proud to say that his angels were flawless. He would usually stock on skin medications like Katialis and other topical ointments for the kids.

When they were sick, he was more bothered than me. He insisted on bringing the kids to the hospital even if I assured him they had nothing more than a slight fever. He was a mother wrapped in a father's body.

Now that he is miles away, his loved ones really feel the vacuum that he left. And we do not know how long it will take before we can adjust to his absence. Every so often, the kids would ask when we are going to the US Embassy for our interviews so we can join him.

He has been urging me to apply for a job in the place where he lives now so that I can bring the kids there. I am assured of his fidelity to me and I am convinced of his great love for the kids whenever he vows to move heaven and earth so that we can be together soon.

I would be lying if I said I am not excited about joining my dear husband abroad. After the many stories he has told me about the US and the many opportunities it opens, I cannot help but wish to join the bandwagon of professionals going abroad. We cannot deprive our three girls of the bright future that they deserve. We will not risk giving them a bleak tomorrow due to poor education, an unsafe environment, an unstable economy, self-serving lawmakers, etc. Indeed, there is nothing we won't do for them.

I am certain that the love that binds my husband, our three girls and me will survive the test of time and distance. Geography doesn't matter. The firm family bond will always be there. Our love will keep us going.

Belen Docena-Asuelo, 29, teaches English at Don Alejandro Roces Sr. Science Technology High School in Quezon City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

In denial

"The AFP remains in a state of almost total denial of the need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to [it]."

—Philip Alston, UN special rapporteur, after a 10-day visit to look into extrajudicial killings in the country

Brainwashed

"Mr. Alston is in denial; he's in denial of the atrocities of the other side (leftists)... Once somebody from that body (the UN Human Rights Council) comes here, basically he has a preconditioned mind... He allowed himself to be brainwashed first by the leftists."

—Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales referring to Philip Alston

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Facts are clear, nothing to apologize for

IT PERPLEXES ME WHY THE INQUIRER has, time and again, gotten its "facts" wrong and hardly ever makes corrections even when the facts have already been established and are easily verifiable.

The Feb. 3 editorial titled "Tatad's moral force," again speaks of the Senate "majority's decision to leave the second Jose Velarde envelope unopened...to stop the discovery of the truth, doomed the Estrada impeachment trial." If hiding the truth was the intent, the truth was discovered in the Senate after Edsa II's power grab—when the Senate convened and then Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., with the foreign and local media present, opened the envelope which contained originals of the letter-request written by Jaime Dichaves to the bank vice president for an account in the name of Jose Velarde, which he owned and controlled.

The bank records are there for all too see that Jose Velarde is Jaime Dichaves and not Joseph Estrada. This is the reason the plunder prosecutors never brought the envelope as evidence against me because they knew that presenting it as evidence would prove that I was not Jose Velarde. Pimentel also testified before the Sandiganbayan that when he opened the envelope, there was nothing in it to show that I owned the Velarde account. Two Equitable Bank vice presidents who dealt with the account testified in court to Dichaves' ownership of the account.

With the foreign and local media, including the INQUIRER, present at the Senate's opening of that envelope, why does the INQUIRER insist that the decision not to open the envelope at the impeachment trial was designed to hide the truth?

It should be easy for the INQUIRER to check this out. As a matter of fact, the INQUIRER had a story on the Senate's opening of the "second envelope," even stating that it contained nothing which pinned me down as Jose Velarde or the owner of the account.

Still the INQUIRER distorts the facts on this matter, insinuating that I should first apologize and atone for my actions. But what is there to apologize for, when I and my lawyers have already disproved all the lies and charges in the Sandiganbayan, and even presented proof of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's admission of her having conspired with the military officers, a year before the coup was staged, to grab power from a legitimate and constitutional president? That is the fact. That is the truth.

The editorial also said that I am "quick to claim a clean conscience." Why not? The facts are clear. I have not committed any crime against the Filipino people, nor have I stolen any money from government coffers. I did not lie, cheat or steal. (Edsa II was a lie spun by civil society and the coup conspirators.) I have a clear conscience because I know I am innocent, and my facts are right.

—JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA

CGFNS should consider PRC's competence

"AT TIMES WE SEE THE TREES BUT WE do not see the forest."

Perhaps this is what happened to the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) when it sent a fact-finding mission to Manila last September to look into the leakage of test questions in the June 2006 nursing licensure exam, when the scandal was at its height. It saw the trees.

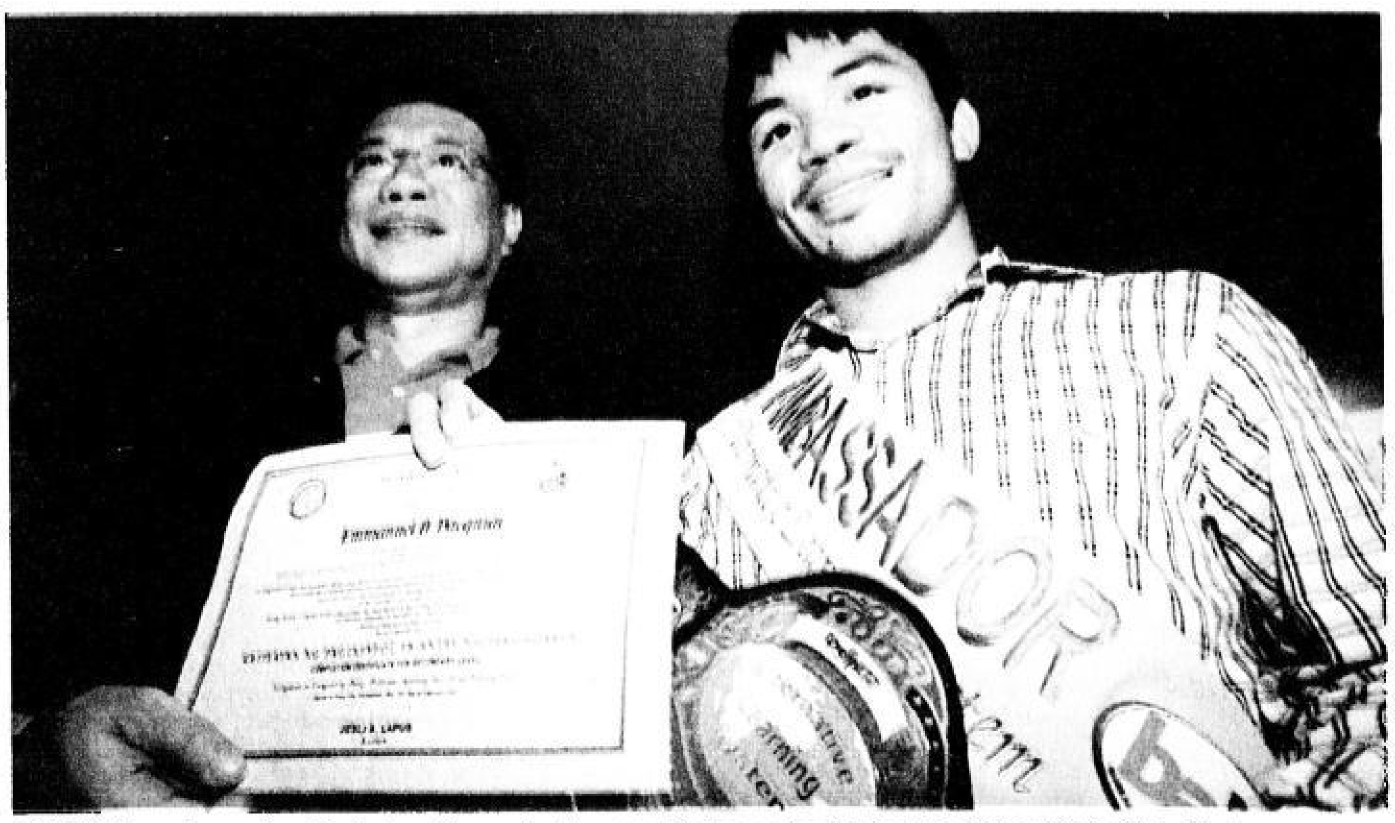
Perhaps, the CGFNS may now be able to see the forest, too. All these years the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) has been giving licenses to thousands of nurses (and other professionals). And these nurses are highly appreciated for their competence, the reason they are very much in demand, too, all over the world, including the United States where 83 percent of foreigner-nurses are from the Philippines. In this, the PRC has shown itself most competent.

After the June 2006 nursing licensure exam, the same PRC has been confronted with questions regarding integrity. It is the same PRC which by December of the same year came up with a determination of what was the best thing to do: let some who passed and some who did not, retake Tests 3 and 5. The rest it considered to have satisfactorily hurdled the exam and, therefore, deserving of a PRC license.

We have no reason to believe that the license given by the PRC to the June 2006 passers (the validity of which the CGFNS does not question) is different from any license it has ever given out. But this is the license which the CGFNS cannot see as "comparable to a US license."

Could it be that the CGFNS still sees the trees (the controversy which has been resolved) rather than the forest (the license for what it is worth, considering the track record of the PRC and the performance of all its holders throughout the world)? Can't the CGFNS see the issue not in the context of the leakage but in the light of the proven ability of the PRC to do what it is mandated to do—give a credible license?

—FR. JESUS V. DUMAUAL, MSC, Sacred Heart Parish, Barangay Bantug, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija



MANNY Pacquiao receives his diploma for passing the accreditation and equivalency test (A and E) for high school.

Pacquiao for President, but not now, in the future, maybe

FIRST OF ALL, LET IT BE CLEAR THAT I support Manny Pacquiao's desire "to help the Filipino people." It's an admirable goal. The Filipino people do need help. And Manny, with all the millions he has earned from his fights and lucrative endorsement contracts, is in a position to do that, even now—right now.

That said, let me offer these thoughts which I hope he and his friends will seriously consider:

1. He doesn't have to run for Congress to help the Filipino people. By showing dedication during training and grit during his fights, he also showed the world the best of what a Filipino can do. Every time he steps inside the ring, he has the power to unite all the Filipinos, including the millions of OFWs all over the world. That's one thing not even President Macapagal-Arroyo or any politician can do.

2. He should listen to his mother's initial advice. After all, before he reached his well-deserved fame and fortune, she was there for him. Unlike the self-serving politicians who love getting photographed while parading with him and who benefit from their being associated with him, she only has his best interest in mind. She doesn't have any hidden agenda.

3. If Pacquiao really wants to help, he can start with something that is well within his power to do. One that does not require getting elected. Like putting up a foundation for Filipino athletes. By athletes, I don't mean the millionaire PBA players but the amateurs who represent the country in international competitions. They are among the most exploited sectors in our society. They are used and abused by politicos every time they win but are generally ignored during training or after retiring due to injuries caused by substandard equipment and poor training facilities. We have read about some of them resorting to begging just to survive, after years of serving the country. Pacquiao can champion their cause. He can share his millions with their families by way of endowment or trust funds. Call it the Manny Pacquiao Filipino Athletes Foundation. This can be his legacy. Let him concentrate on being a fighter for now. Let him listen to Freddie Roach. Let him keep on winning for the country. Let him keep on getting more endorsement contracts and earn more for his family. In between, he can continue to hone his singing and acting skills. Enroll in some short-term public management course. After retiring as the Best Filipino Boxer ever, he can then offer to use all his acquired skills and knowledge in the service of the Filipino people, as an elected official, even as the President of the Republic!

—ED DAMES,
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Not anti-Erap but pro-truth

IN HER FEB. 18 COLUMN ("THE noise of democracy"), Patricia Evangelista made it appear that then Sen. Loren Legarda was anti-Erap during the impeachment trial of Joseph Estrada. Legarda was neither anti-Erap nor pro-Erap at the time. She was pro-truth.

If Legarda cried during the trial, it was because the vote that stopped the opening of the "second envelope" practically stopped the truth from coming out. As a senator-judge in the impeachment trial, Legarda wanted all pieces of evidence to be presented so she could vote fairly and objectively.

I agree with Evangelista though that we should take sides in this election and that "neutrality will never help anyone but the oppressor." The question is: Who has been our country's oppressor?

The youth should be able to answer this question quite easily.

—REMUS MANGCUCANG,
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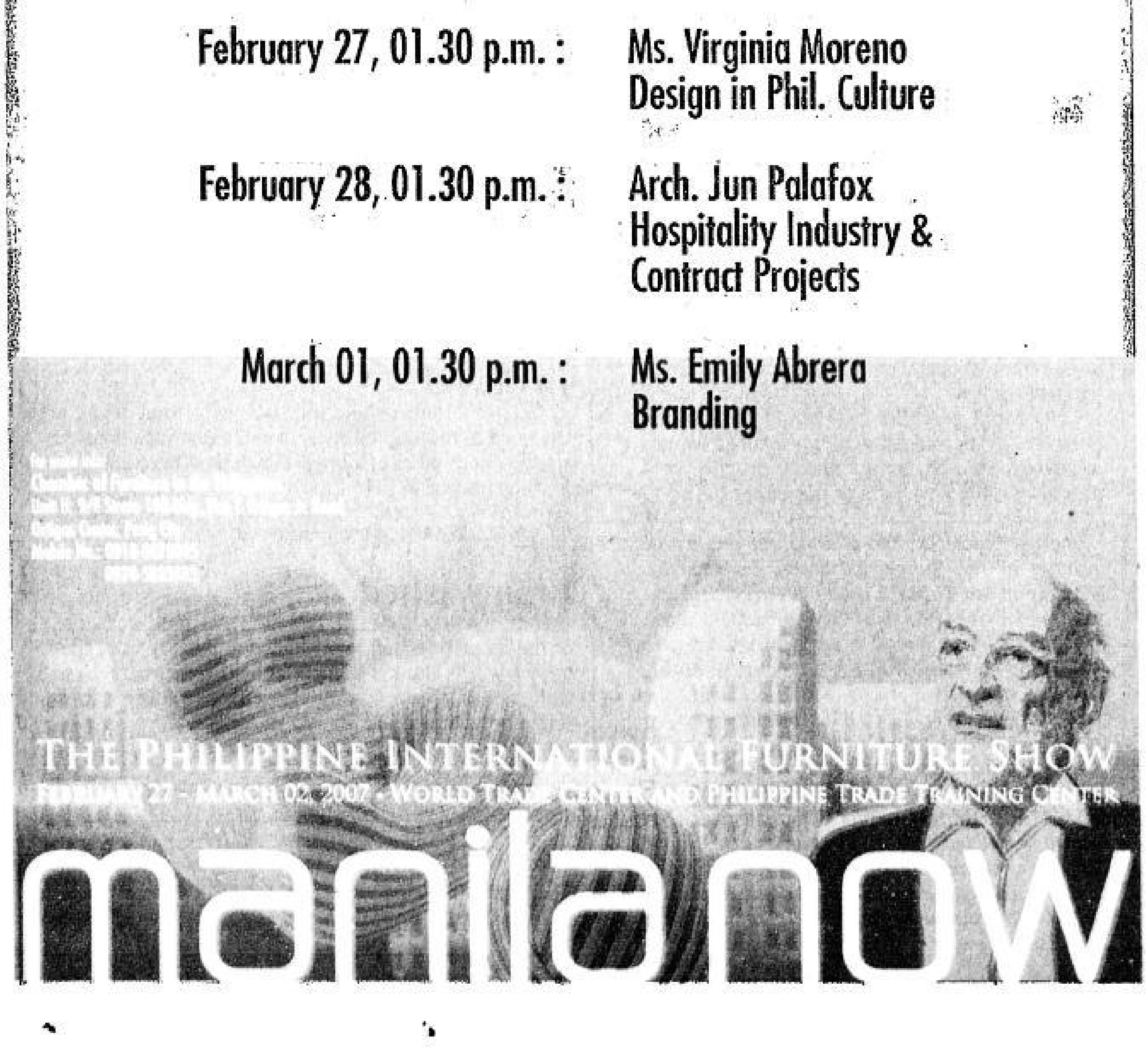

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The long wait is over as the hottest local anthology returns. Youngblood³ is in the house, loaded with the best essays from 1999 to 2004 in the most concentrated Youngblood package yet. Bear witness as a generation continues its evolution. This is the Filipino youth at their most honest and most eloquent. Here are the essays that matter from the newspaper that started it all. Youngblood³ is the young Filipino—unplugged.

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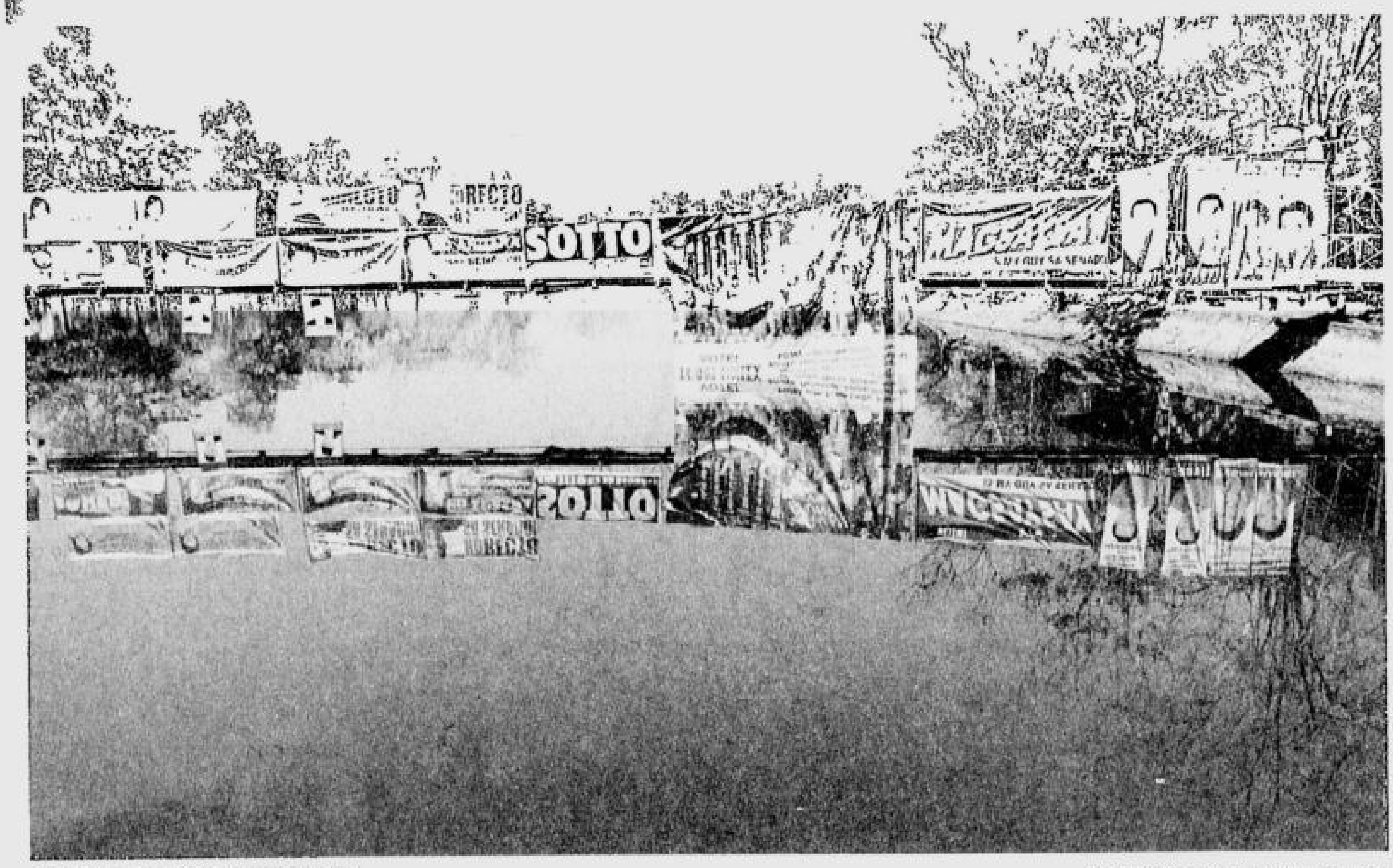
Lakas disintegrating in Pangasinan



CAMPAIGN CLOTHESLINE

RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

A hanging bridge near the Don Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center in Lingayen, Pangasinan is turned into what looks like clothesline by candidates whose single objective is to achieve name recall.

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE BIGGEST OF SEVERAL parties that form the administration coalition faces the possibility of self-destruction right in its turf as a result of indecision by top party leaders, including President Macapagal-Arroyo.

ELECTION 07

Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino, the party's provincial chair, said the Lakas-NUCD could not afford to allow this indecision over who to endorse as official candidate for governor of Pangasinan linger.

"There is a problem *at di puwedeng magtagal ito* (and this should not linger). While the national candidates of Team Unity are campaigning, down below, there is disunity. *Kaya't kailangan talaga, ayusin na ito* (We need to resolve this)," Lambino told the INQUIRER.

Lambino was referring to the continued indecision of the Lakas-CMD leadership on who to proclaim as the administration party's official gubernatorial candidate in the province.

The choice is between him and Dr. Jamie Eloise Agbayani, wife of outgoing Gov. Victor Agbayani.

Another candidate, Pangasinan Rep. Amado Espino Jr. of the second district, has been endorsed by the Nationalist People's Coalition and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), which, along with Lakas-CMD, are members of the administration coalition.

Local political leaders had expected President Macapagal-Arroyo to name the administration's gubernatorial candidate during her campaign sortie with Team Unity in the province on Saturday. The announcement never came.

"*Wala pa, eh. Hindi naman pinag-usapan ang* local problems. *Basta nagkita-kita lang doon at nag-usap-usap pero wala pa* (None yet. We never talked about local problems. We just met and talked during the proclamation rally but we never discussed anything concerning the local slate)," Lambino said.

"They were here for the senatorial slate. That's the one that was discussed. As far as I know, Lakas has not endorsed any candidate yet," Governor Agbayani said.

But Lambino said the impasse must be resolved as soon as possible so local candidates can prepare their lineup. "There are people complaining that while they are Lakas incumbents, the party would still induct people who would run against a fellow Lakas member. So the party should decide immediately on who will be its official candidate for governor so we can at least see a semblance of unity in Pangasinan," he said.

As the Lakas-CMD provincial co-chair, Agbayani had been inducting new Lakas-CMD members from various parts of the province in the last several days.

Lambino said he had written Ms Arroyo to seek her endorsement for his gubernatorial bid. He said his letter was endorsed by former President Fidel Ramos, Lakas-CMD chair emeritus.

"But until now, there is still no final decision. So, I don't know. They are saying the issue is still with [the administration coalition's] arbitration [committee]," Lambino said.

Church to voters: Don't take money from bets

DAGUPAN CITY—"*WALANG Hihingi. Walang Tatanggap* (Do not ask. Do not receive)."

This was the call of the Lingayen-Dagupan archdiocese to voters through streamers that will be hung in churchyards and in front of Catholic schools in the province.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz said the slogan was part of the Catholic Church's education program on the people's involvement, rights and responsibilities during elections.

Cruz met on Monday with parish priests who will be tasked with overseeing the activities that the archdiocese will undertake in the May 14 elections.

These activities include voters' education, voters' assistance such as finding their precincts, poll watch to record what is happening during balloting in the precincts, and quick count.

"The education program involves the analysis of communities to find out their problems and needs, and the qualities needed in leaders to face these problems and needs. Through the analysis, voters can make a decision who to vote for and why," Cruz said.

But he emphasized that the Church would endorse candidates with three qualities: Integrity, capacity and winnability.

"Those who are pro-gambling do not pass the integrity test. Those with many husbands or wives do not pass the morality test," he said.

But there will be no open endorsements, Cruz said, adding: "It would only be through the word of mouth that the Church's chosen candidates will be known to the voters."

The archdiocese, which is conducting the quick count in cooperation with the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, will only count votes for local candidates.

The chosen candidates will be known after March 29 when all candidates will have filed their certificates of candidacy, Cruz said.

He said the Church was taking the May 14 elections seriously as "it is crucial in the life of the nation as a whole."

"We cannot afford another flawed elections like the 2004 elections," he said. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Woman gives birth to quadruplets

TUGUEGARAO CITY—A 25-year-old woman gave birth to quadruplets by caesarian section on Saturday at the St. Paul Hospital here. Grace Lucas, of Roxas Village in Naguilian, Isabela, suffered blood loss after giving birth to two boys and two girls but is now in stable condition, according to a cousin. The girls, Mary Hannah and Azumi, weighed 1.8 kilograms, while the boys, Jeremiah and Ashley, weighed 1.3 kilograms and were placed in an incubator. Except for Lucas' mother Linda, visitors were not allowed in the intensive care unit where Grace and her babies were confined. Lucas, a former contract worker in Japan, got pregnant in June last year from a relationship with a Japanese trader. When her contract expired, she went home and took care of her pregnancy in the province. The family earlier asked for assistance from the provincial government after Grace found that she would be having four babies. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

NPA rebels burn hacienda truck

BACOLOD CITY—New People's Army (NPA) rebels on Saturday burned two tractors and a cargo truck owned by Hacienda Gamboa in Barangay Caduhaan, Cadiz City, 65.2 kilometers north of here. The military said the Hacienda Gamboa management reportedly refused to pay P1 million in "revolutionary taxes" to the rebels. Lt. Col. Felicisimo Budiongan, Task Group North commander, said the family of E.B. Magalona Mayor Alfonso Gamboa owns the hacienda. "Whether you give them P1 or P1 million, if you start doing it, they will not stop demanding payment," he said. *Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Buy Filipino, bet tells people

OPPOSITION senatorial candidate Loren Legarda urged consumers to patronize locally made products to improve the economy and provide more employment and income to the people. In a statement, Legarda said she was issuing the appeal after purchasing 100 pairs of beaded slippers made by local manufacturers from a store in San Pablo City in Laguna and wearing one the whole day. "These slippers are sturdy, comfortable, beautiful and of good quality," said Legarda in her statement. She campaigned in San Pablo, saying her father, Antonio Cabrera Legarda, was a native of the city.

New irrigation facilities sought

SEN. Edgardo Angara asked the Department of Agriculture to develop new irrigation technologies for Pangasinan and a comprehensive coastal resource management plan for the fishery resource-rich Lingayen Gulf. A former agriculture secretary, Angara made the call during the Pangasinan leg of the Team Unity ticket's campaign, adding that the two issues were among the most urgent agro-fishery concerns of the province. He said the search for new irrigation technologies is imperative because Pangasinan has three major irrigation and multi-purpose dams along the giant Agno River and there is no longer room for costly, giant dams. "What we need are irrigation systems that are cheap to build and easy to maintain," he said. Pangasinan is one of the biggest rice producers in the country and, according to statistics, has the biggest area planted to hybrid rice seeds.

Danish man dies snorkeling in Siquijor

DUMAGUETE CITY—A Danish tourist died while snorkeling off the coast of Siquijor Island on Monday. The body of Soren Mikkelsen, 57, was found by villagers of San Juan town in Siquijor at about 8 a.m. yesterday. Dr. Ruel Quisel, municipal health officer, said Mikkelsen was already dead when the villagers found him. He said workers at Coco Groove Resort, where the Danish stayed, tried to resuscitate him, "but his body was already stiff." He said there were no signs of foul play, as the body had no wounds or scratches. "He must have suffered a heart attack or he could have succumbed to a pulmonary problem," Quisel said. *Alex Pal, Inquirer Visayas*

Mining firm says extraction limit changed

A MINING FIRM OPERATING IN Palawan said yesterday it can't afford to extract nickel beyond the limitations set by the government, its lawyer said yesterday.

PGMC lawyer Joaquin Obieta, of the Corporate Counsels Philippines, invoked Republic Act 7076, otherwise known as the People's Small-Scale Mining Act of 1991, sustaining the decision of Malacañang that "such limitation of 50,000 metric tons of ore extraction no longer exists."

"Therefore, there was no violation of the environmental compliance certificates by my client," he said in a statement.

In a 17-page decision, the Palace maintained that "Presidential Decree 1899 promulgated in 1984, which provided a limitation of 50,000 metric tons of ore has already been effectively amended or repealed in that under the new law RA 7076 of 1991, such limitation no longer exists."

"PGMC did not violate the ECCs because the limitation or prohibition under the ECC refers to the volume of nickel," the decision, signed by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, said.

For every 1,000 metric tons of nickel, only 5 percent of these are nickel, Obieta explained.

"The alleged extraction of 308,318 metric tons of nickel ore by PGMC is grossly misleading," he said.

While the Philippine Ports Authority certified the transshipment of 308,318 metric tons of nickel ore to Australia, only 6,000 metric tons were pure nickel in less than two years from 2005 to 2006.

"We relied on the volume of nickel measurement of well-respected smelters of an international laboratory in Australia. We also counterchecked the quantity with our own laboratory," Obieta said.

Transshipment

He said water was pumped into the barge containing the 308,318 metric tons of nickel ore at the time of the transshipment.

"One-third of the weight of the nickel ore consisted of water," he said.

He said Malacañang came up with an "intelligent" decision after an honest and thorough study of the dispute.

In 2003, PGMC and the Olympic Mines and Development Corp. entered into an operating agreement in the extraction of nickel in two mining sites in Palawan. Olympic Mines religiously received a 2.5 percent royalty from PGMC.

On the other hand, PGMC invested P150 million, undertook the legal, technical and environmental requisites, managed and operated the mining activities, and implemented rehabilitation and agricultural projects in the mining sites.

On April 18, 2006, Olympic entered into another operating agreement with the Rockworks Resources Corp. as a joint venture company, the Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., to oust PGMC from the mining sites.

"The main reason Citinickel is interested to take over the mining sites is because the price of nickel went up by 400 percent in the world market in the past three years," Obieta said.

Cops hold Moro farmer without arrest warrant

DAVAO CITY—AUTHORITIES detained a Moro farmer here for about 30 hours starting Friday afternoon on suspicion that he was involved in a series of bombings in Central Mindanao.

The farmer, Nahar Darawi, was freed on Sunday.

At least six people were killed and dozens wounded when bombs exploded in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat; Makilala and Kidapawan in North Cotabato; and Cotabato City in October and in January.

SPO1 Julianito Lenterna of the Bunawan District police said Darawi, 20, was "invited" to verify a military report he could be involved in the bomb attacks.

He said Darawi was taken from Purok 5 in Barangay San Isidro in Bunawan.

That his detention was not backed by an arrest warrant was confirmed by Lenterna.

"There was no arrest warrant because he was just invited for questioning ... The police only invited him for verification," he said.

Col. Allan Luga, commander of the Task Force Davao, said Darawi was only called "for custodial debriefing."

He admitted that the farmer was also asked about his knowledge of Basit Usman, the prime suspect in the bombings. Usman is included in Washington's list of terrorists.

Darawi "submitted himself voluntarily for questioning (but he) was released because there were no reasons for him to be held longer or no case filed for him to be detained longer," Luga said.

Darawi denied that he voluntarily went with the police and that several military agents took him from the village. One of the officers threatened to shoot him, he said.

He said he was taking a nap in their house when the lawmen barged in.

The first questioning was held under a fruit tree at around 2 p.m., Darawi said it lasted for three hours, he said. *Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

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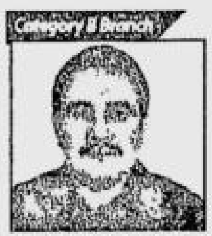
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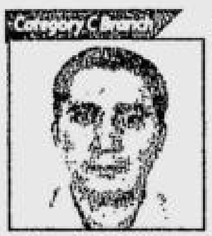
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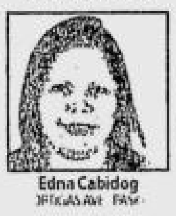
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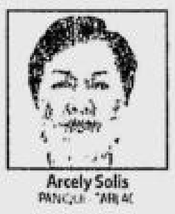
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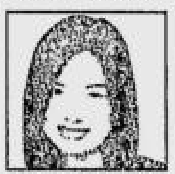
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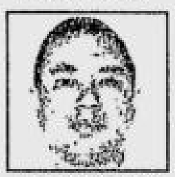
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German de Ocampo
MALABON - RIZAL AVE.

Lisa Baylon
GOVERNOR'S DR - CARMONA

Veron Chan Go
8TH AVENUE - GRACE PARK

Carmela David
SCT LIMBAGA-T.MORATO

Gertrudes Balagut
MINDANAO AVE - [illegible]

Ludy Ho
VALERIA - ILOILO

Margarita Leonardia
ARANETA - BACOLOD

Diosdado R. Te
STA. ANA - DAVAO CITY

Menam Gregorio
[illegible]

Gloria Magboo
[illegible] - BAUAN

Agnes Jamias
RUSTAN'S-LAGUNA TECHNO

Selina Dungao
SEVERINO - C.M.RECTO

Lea de Leon
PORT AREA SOUTH HARBOR

Elizabeth Casanas
REDEMPTORIST RD - BACLARAN

Quirino Santiago
SM NORTH EDSA

Ralph Macaspac
MARIKINA - J.P.RIZAL

Mercedita Villegas
DIGOS - GEN LUNA

Emilie Dimalanta
DOLORES - SAN FERNANDO

Veronica Beso
[illegible]

Jose Emilio Alcalde
PADRE FAURA - A.MABINI

Lilian Lim
DASMARINAS ST. - BINONDO

Precy Villamar
MERALCO CENTER ORTIGAS

Policarpio Carlos
CAPITOL - PASIG

Vivian Mangeluz
BRIXTON HILL - G. ARANETA

Francisco Darang
SALAZAR-TACLOBAN

Gloria Gonzales
9TH AVENUE - GRACE PARK

Carmelita David
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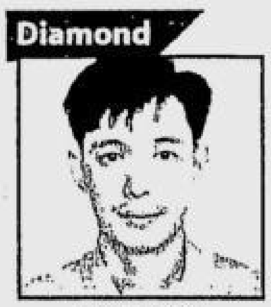
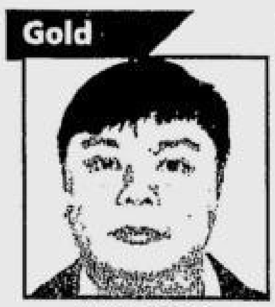

Edward Fong

Gold


Dexter Aligan

Silver

Celestial Guerrero

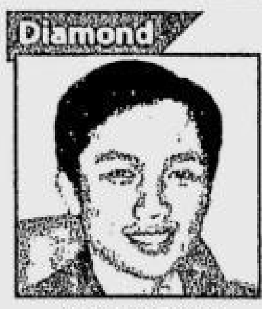
AIG Excellence Award

Dexter Aligan

FINANCIAL SALES EXECUTIVES

Chairman's Award

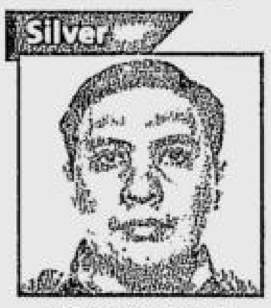
Diamond


Ferdinand Ravara

Gold

Jun Sandoval

Silver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AIG Excellence Award

Jonel Cecilio

President's Award

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Pamela Sarmiento

Grace Paras

Cristina Lejano

Jenny Rose Dizon

Roscelle Sadian

Gregorio Almoradie

Sunday Nuñez

Amie Redoba

Adrian Oquindo

Cathleen Montallana

Jerome Marcos

Carol Mapue

Marissa Del Camat

Vicky Garcia

Saturnino Ignacio

Monserrat Baraguer

Cherry Miranda

Pamela Paras

Doris Hurtada

Maricris Andoyo

Aileen Aquino

Carmencita Bautista

Ma. Asuncion Bondoc

Rachelle Rapadas

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Aristotle Salvador

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Anabel Bartolome

Charisse Tubu

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Lara May Pangilinan

Rookie FSE of the Year

Aristotle Salvador

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Ruben Crisostomo
Top Peso Producer

Carol Mapue
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REGION 2

Jerome Marcos
Top Dollar Producer

Ferdinand Ravara
Top Peso Producer
Highest Ordinary Case Count Producer

REGION 3

Charlene Coroza
Top Dollar Producer
Top Peso Producer

Monseratt Baraguer
Highest Ordinary Case Count Producer

Accident and Health Award

Area Managers -

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Premium Producer

Edward Fong
Top 2 A&H Producer

Raymond Gutierrez
Top 3 A&H Producer

Financial Sales Executives

Ferdinand Ravara
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Alain de Leon
Top 2 A&H Producer

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Spurn violence, says Gringo

By Alcuin Papa

THE FILIPINO PEOPLE MUST "FOREVER REJECT violence and illegal methods to achieve political power." Only a "united people" participating in the elections would lead to true economic recovery.

These words came yesterday from detained former senator, colonel and rebel Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan.

Honasan released the statement just as the country was celebrating the 21st anniversary of the Edsa I People Power Revolution in which he was an active player.

In the 1980s, he was a leader of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, a group of junior officers who plotted a failed coup against the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The group later joined up with then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and then Armed Forces Vice Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos when they announced they were breaking away from the Marcos regime.

After Marcos was ousted, Honasan led several coup attempts against the administration of his successor, President Corazon Aquino.

After being captured, he was pardoned and eventually won a Senate seat.

This time he is raring to hit the campaign trail again in a bid to regain a Senate seat.

His lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, said yesterday Honasan was finalizing the production of his campaign materials.

Honasan was arrested last November in Quezon City after a warrant for his arrest was issued for his alleged involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny. The government is also preparing charges against him for his alleged participation in last year's botched February coup.

Gutierrez said the campaign preparations were in anticipation of his release. The lawyer said he had filed a motion asking that his client be allowed to post bail.

"He is raring to campaign. I just talked to him and we are finalizing his campaign stickers and jingle. All that is lacking is the campaign funds," Gutierrez told the INQUIRER, laughing.

He said Honasan's campaign jingle will be based on the theme of ABS-CBN's "Super Inggo" series. Honasan's daughter-in-law, rocker Barbie Almabis, managed to convince the song's composer to let them use it for the campaign.

Gutierrez said they were hopeful the Makati court would allow Honasan to post bail on the grounds that he was entitled to it since no case has been filed against him. Makati City Judge Oscar Pimentel had granted Honasan's request for a reinvestigation of his case.

"A reinvestigation of his case has been ordered. So theoretically it's back to square one for the prosecutors. It's a long shot but we are hoping the judge would grant bail so he can campaign," Gutierrez said.

Honasan's campaign, Gutierrez said, would be launched on Friday in Davao City whether or not he is allowed out on bail or not.

Gutierrez also said Honasan's relatives had started campaigning for him by distributing aprons to store owners at Quezon City markets.

"(Edsa I) was a peaceful revolution (that) highlighted the truism that violence is never the solution to achieve lasting change for all, that what it does is promote bitterness, fratricidal conduct and heightened partisan divisiveness, instead of true peace and genuine reconciliation. We as a people must therefore forever reject violence and illegal methods to achieve political power," Honasan said in the statement.

Vaunted 'Erap magic' is no more – Sotto

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT USED TO BE THAT FORMER President Joseph Estrada's endorsement spelled the difference between victory and defeat in an election. Not anymore, apparently.

Administration Team Unity senatorial bet Vicente "Tito" Sotto II, who used to be on the opposition side, said the "Erap magic" was not as potent as before as there were now as many Filipinos who dislike the ousted former leader as President Macapagal-Arroyo.

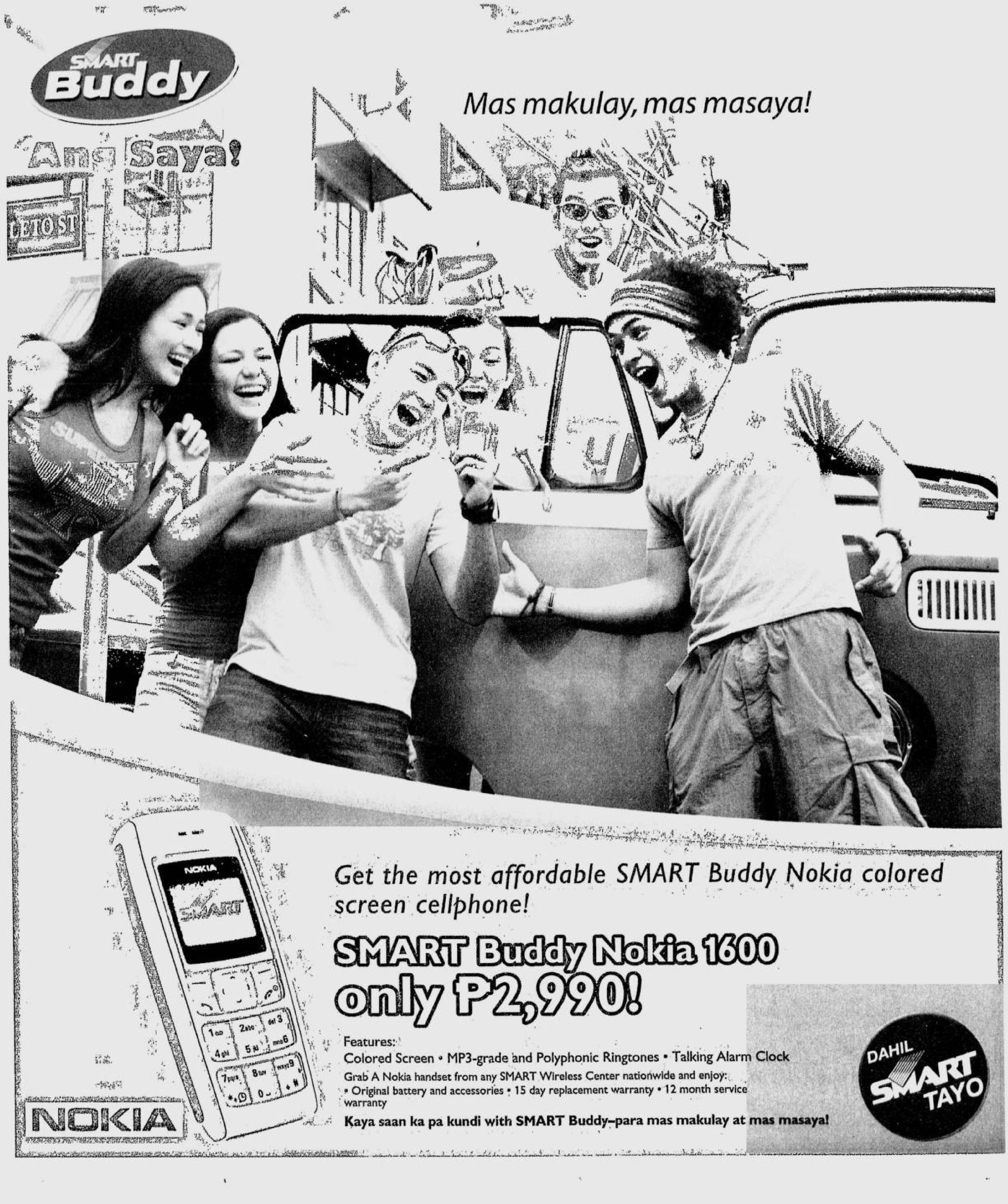
In an interview during a break in Team Unity's campaign planning held at the College of St. Benilde in Manila, Sotto said, "Anybody's endorsement will always be good but there is always a negative factor to [it]. As a matter of fact, the surveys show a 20 to 22 percent negative effect if this individual endorses you. On the other hand, there is also a 20 to 22 percent negative effect if another individual endorses you."

Sotto said this meant the majority of voters would not vote solely on the say-so of either Ms Arroyo or Estrada.

"I don't think Erap or GMA is the issue. This is the midterm election, the majority of the people will vote for who they think deserve it. That's 48 percent of the voters, it's a big number," he said.

Sotto said he took this as a sign of a "mature" voting population.

Despite changing sides, Sotto said he believed he had "the same chances" this time around as his successful senatorial bid in 1998 when he ran under the Estrada presidential ticket.



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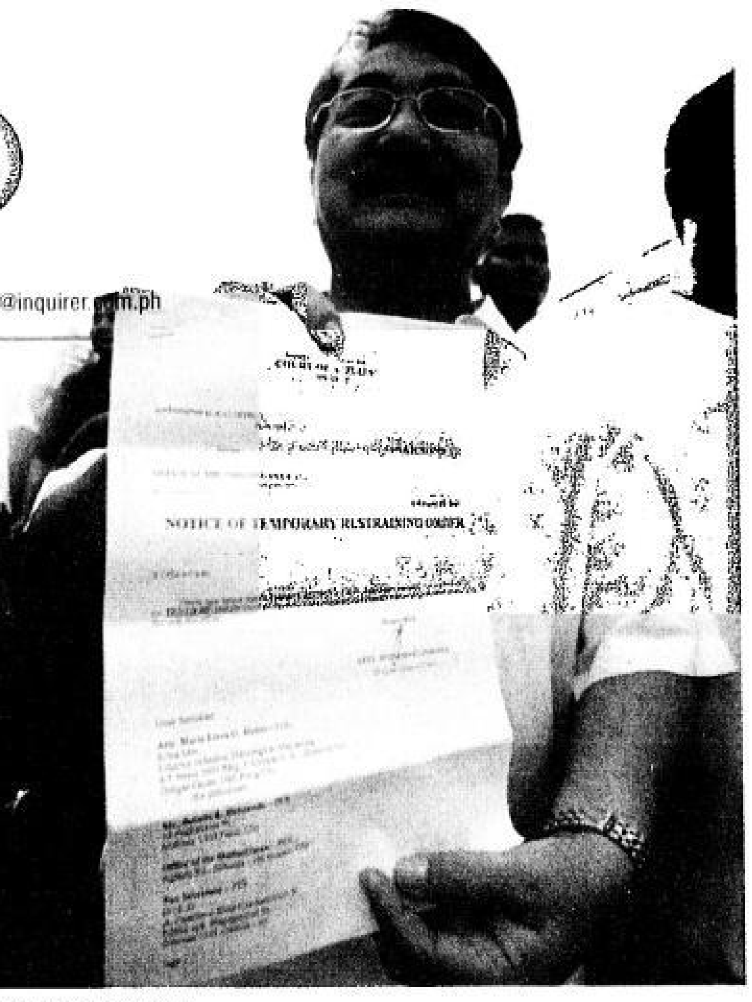
Ex-vice mayor's return rebuffed anew in Pasay



CALIXTO: Turned away a second time in his efforts to return to his old post at City Hall. REM ZAMORA

By Julie M. Aurelio

DISMISSED PASAY CITY VICE MAYOR Antonino Calixto's move to take back his post has failed once again.

Last Friday, he went to City Hall carrying a temporary restraining order (TRO) from the Court of Appeals which he argued, effectively made him the acting mayor in place of dismissed Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad. The police, however, sent him and his followers home.

Yesterday, Calixto returned to City Hall to preside over the flag-raising ceremony but was rebuffed once again, this time by the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

In a letter addressed to Calixto, Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar said he was still waiting for a clarification from the appeals court regarding the TRO it issued last week.

"Please be advised that pending clarification from that honorable court on our manifestation, we shall be constrained to observe in the meantime the status quo prior to the issuance of the Court of Appeals temporary restraining order," Andanar said.

This means that Mayor Alan Panaligan and Vice Mayor Arvin Tolentino, who replaced Trinidad and Calixto last year when both were suspended and subsequently dismissed from office, will remain in their posts.

"*Wala na muna siyang mababalikan doon, either as* mayor or vice mayor," Andanar said in a phone interview, referring to Calixto.

Last week, the 10th Division of the CA issued a TRO instructing the Office of the Ombudsman and DILG "to cease and desist" from implementing the Ombudsman's Jan. 12 deci-

EX-VICE MAYOR'S/ A18

Navotas seeks plebiscite for cityhood

By Tina G. Santos

NAVOTAS MAYOR TOBY TIANGCO wants the Commission on Elections to speed up the conduct of a plebiscite on the ratification of a bill converting his town into a city.

"We hope the Comelec can hold it preferably before the March 29 deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy for the local elections," Tiangco told a Kapihan sa Manila Hotel forum yesterday.

House Bill 5500, that would turn the town of Navotas into a city, was forwarded on Feb. 7 to Malacañang for President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature. Once signed into law, a plebiscite will be conducted within 30 days in which residents will vote for or against cityhood.

If the plebiscite is conducted before the May 14 elections, Navotas residents will be able to elect to Congress a representative of their city. Otherwise, they will have to wait until 2010 "which is most unfair and prejudicial to their interest," Tiangco said.

"Our only chance is for the Comelec to help us and in the interest of justice and fairness to act and conduct the plebiscite within this period," the mayor added. "We've already gone through and suffered a lot from the delays in the pursuit of the enact-

NAVOTAS/ A18

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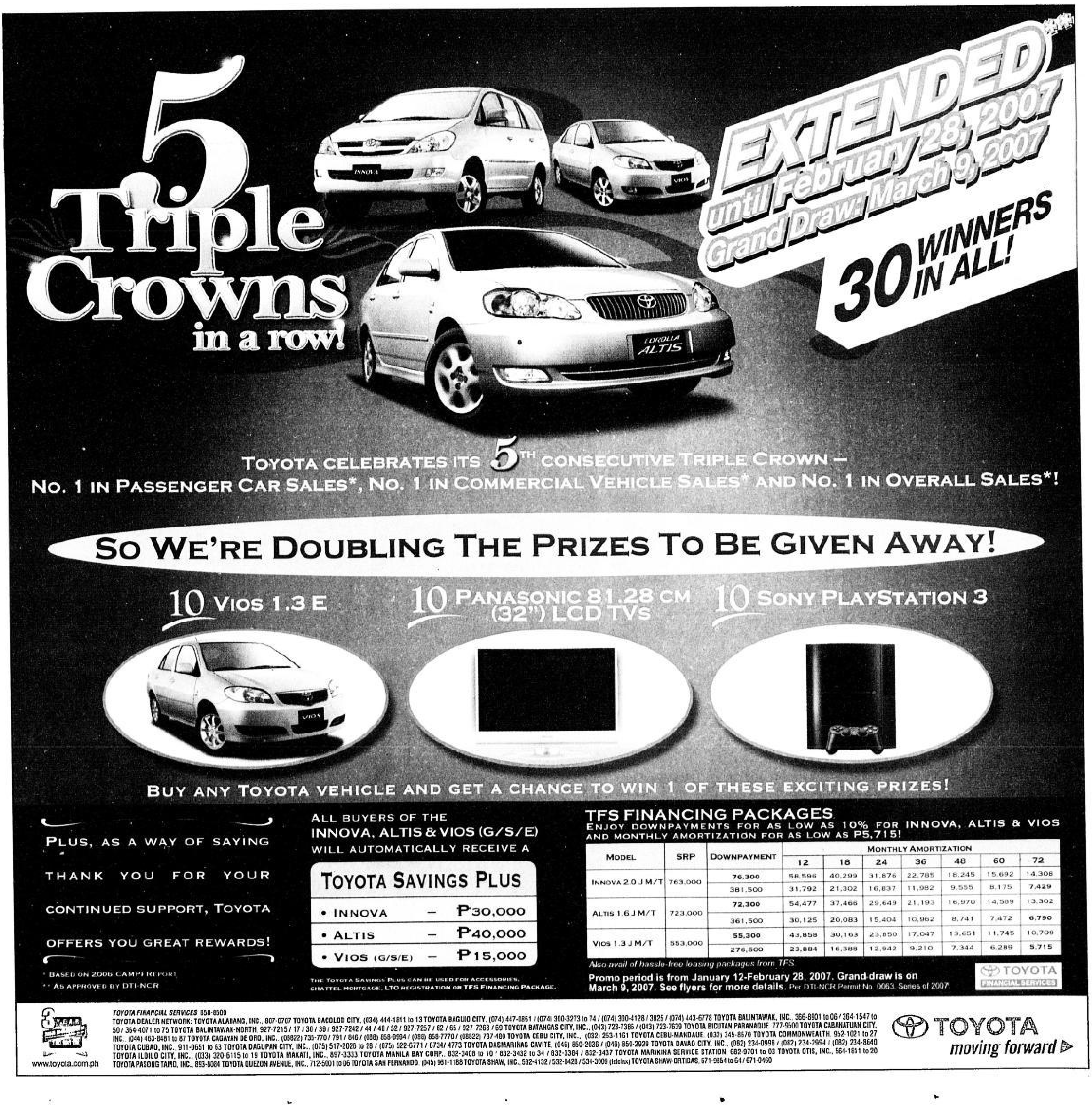

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ALTIS 1.6 J M/T	723,000	72,300	54,477	37,466	29,649	21,193	16,970	14,589	13,302
		361,500	30,125	20,083	15,404	10,962	8,741	7,472	6,790
VIOS 1.3 J M/T	553,000	55,300	43,858	30,163	23,850	17,047	13,651	11,745	10,709
		276,500	23,884	16,388	12,942	9,210	7,344	6,289	5,715

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QC court clears MMDA group in demolition case

By DJ Yap

A QUEZON CITY COURT HAS junked a civil damage suit filed by a "*sari-sari*" (variety) store owner against personnel of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority whom she accused of demolishing her stall and confiscating her merchandise two years ago.

According to Judge Angelene Mary Quimpo-Sale of QC Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 32, she found no merit in Gloria Fenol's complaint, saying the MMDA's Sidewalk Clearing Operations Group (SCOG) headed by Bobby Esquivel had the authority to clear public places of illegal structures.

In an eight-page decision handed down last Friday, the judge cleared Esquivel and his men—RL Barte, Rosendo Reyes, Antonio Protestante, Roel Pedragorda, Rodolfo Fernando and several John Does—of any liability in the case.

In her complaint, Fenol accused the MMDA men of dismantling her stall on a sidewalk in Cubao, and seizing her goods on Feb. 3, 2005, even after she showed them her business permit and other clearances from the city government. The complainant also accused four other SCOG men, who were not named as defendants but were identified in police reports, of mauling her and her son, Ferdinand, during the operation.

She claimed the "harassment" continued the next day when the SCOG members dismantled her stall again and loaded her merchandise on a pickup truck after she reopened her store.

But the defendants argued that Fenol's stall was an illegal structure erected on the arcade or sidewalk intended for public use.

The judge cited MMDA Resolution 02-28 that gave the agency the power to clear Metro Manila's sidewalks, streets, avenues, alleys, bridges, parks and other public places of all obstructions.

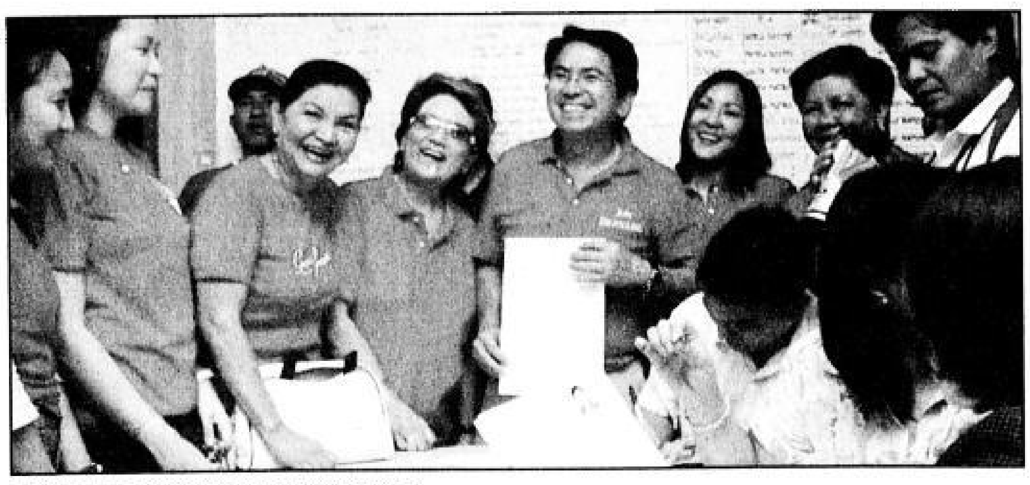
According to the resolution, "all items, goods and structures found in prohibited public places being used for commercial purposes shall be confiscated by the government without prior notice, shall be treated as common garbage and shall be disposed of as such."

Quimpo-Sale also said the four men who allegedly hurt Fenol and her son—Carlo Mapanao, Lexter Mckenzie, Johnny Agana and Arthur Nieva—could not be held liable since they were not defendants in the case and thus, the court had not acquired jurisdiction over them.

DID YOU KNOW

FILIPINO martyr Jose Abad Santos—after whom two schools in Manila and Quezon City were named—was born on Feb. 19, 1886 in San Fernando, Pampanga. He was chief justice and concurrent justice secretary of the country when Japanese forces arrested him on April 10, 1942. After he refused to renounce his allegiance to the United States and the Philippines, he was executed on May 2 of that year in Malabang, Lanao del Sur. His remains were never found. Abad Santos' image is included, along with those of Josefa Llanes Escoda and Vicente Lim, other martyrs of the Japanese Occupation, on the P1,000 bill.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research



SECOND TRY FOR BERNABE

Parañaque City Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. (center), the administration bet for city mayor in the May 14 elections, filed his certificate of candidacy yesterday at the local Commision on Elections office. Bernabe, who is running for a second term, was accompanied by his wife Girlie (with glasses) and councilors. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Atienza ally joins mayoral race

By Allison W. Lopez

FORMER COUNCILOR GREPOR "Butch" Belgica—a longtime friend of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza—yesterday said he would run against the mayor's son, Ali, for the city's top post.

He announced his decision at the National Press Club, barely a week after his son, Councilor Greco, lost to Don Bagatsing who was chosen by the administration as its candidate for vice mayor.

Belgica now joins the long list of people planning to run for Manila mayor, which includes Ali, Sen. Alfredo Lim, Representatives Rudy Bacani and Joey Hizon and Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna. Former First Lady Imelda Marcos and former Rep. Mark Jimenez are also rumored to be eyeing the post. According to Belgica, a reformed inmate-turned pastor who did time in prison for a homicide charge, he is running because he wants to make his dreams a reality by eliminating drug addicts, car thieves and robbers in the city. He added that he had long wanted to run for mayor, but he gave way to Atienza in the 1998 local election and became his running mate. He lost, however, to Lacuna.

Belgica said he remains "friends" with Atienza. "Nothing personal. Politics is cruel. You can destroy relationships because of ambition or because of principles," he added.

Navotas seeks plebiscite . . .

From page A17

ment of this House bill into a law."

The bill was introduced by Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval. It was passed on third and final reading by the House in August 2006 and by the Senate two months later. A bicameral committee approved the bill in November but Sandoval sent it back to the committee level after he disagreed with the Senate version of the proposed measure.

Tiangco said that with the separation of Malabon and Navotas, the additional allotment for the latter as a city will contribute a lot to improving the lives of residents. He added that the town has met all the requirements for it to qualify as a city, in terms of income, population and land area.

Are all beauty contest bets chaste?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE WIFE OF A FAMOUS VISAYAS congressman recently left him for a lesbian.

She also ran away with their fortune that, according to the congressman's townmates, was illegally acquired.

What goes 'round comes around.

* * *

Binibining Pilipinas candidate Andrea Dimalanta, 22, was disqualified after contest organizers found out that she had worked as a waitress in an "adult entertainment lounge" in Quezon City.

C'mon, guys, give the girl a break! What's wrong with working as a waitress at the Toyz 4 D Boyz Lounge and Café? She wasn't even a guest relations officer (GRO). And even if she was a GRO, what's wrong with that? So long as she didn't sell her body while working at the club, why should that be taken against her?

You think all beauty candidates were chaste when they took part in the pageant?

* * *

You want to know how rampant "jueteng," the illegal numbers game, is under the watch of Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Oscar Calderon?

According to an unimpeachable source, jueteng collectors go around Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna, taking bets from policemen.

The camp is the headquarters of PNP Region 4 that covers all of the Southern Tagalog provinces.

"Sir, it didn't happen in the past. At least, jueteng collectors didn't invade police camps," said my source.

* * *

If elections were held tomorrow, I would vote for Miguel Zubiri, Chavit Singson, Jamalul Kiram and Joker Arroyo in the administration slate. All the rest would be from the opposition ticket.

Zubiri, to represent the youth and because I personally know him to be a fighter, both in and out of the political arena.

Singson, for stronger and more independent local government units.

Kiram, for Muslim-Christian unity. The guy is a good Moro.

Arroyo, for an independent Senate. Even if he's in the administration ticket he would not tolerate abuses from the administration.

****

Joey Sarasola, Philippine National Railways (PNR) general manager, was having lunch yesterday when he got a call from a female TV reporter on his cellular phone.

The reporter was straight to the point: "I'd like to get your side on an accident involving a PNR train that ran over a woman." Or words to that effect.

Why would she get Sarasola's side on a railway accident when there was no controversy to speak of?

Anybody who gets run over by a train is always at fault. The railroad tracks are a train's domain.

TV news networks should teach their field reporters how to conduct interviews.

Ex-vice mayor's

From page A17

sion" ordering Calixto's dismissal from service.

The official, however, told the media yesterday that he has already assumed the post of Pasay vice mayor and acting mayor.

"I have already assumed (office). If I am not allowed inside (the City Hall), I will have to temporarily hold office here at the Pasay City Sports Complex," Calixto said.

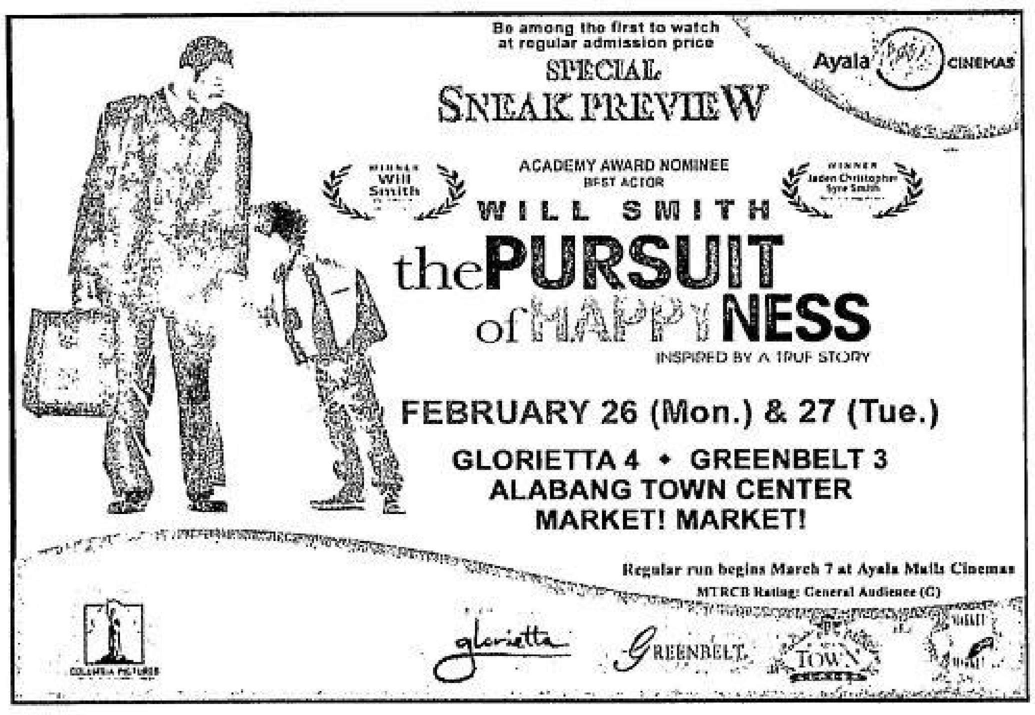
He sought refuge at the health center on F.B. Harrison Street after his blood pressure rose to 160/100 when Pasay police chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio, barred him and his followers from entering City Hall.

"We have 300 men guarding City Hall, half of it came from the Southern Police District while 150 are members of our local police," Valerio said.

A group of antiriot police was stationed in front of City Hall while a fire truck was on standby.

According to Calixto, he will file contempt of court charges against Valerio, Panaligan and the DILG for ignoring the appeals court's order.

Panaligan, meanwhile, urged the vice mayor to just wait for the DILG's implementing order and the clarification to be issued by the court.



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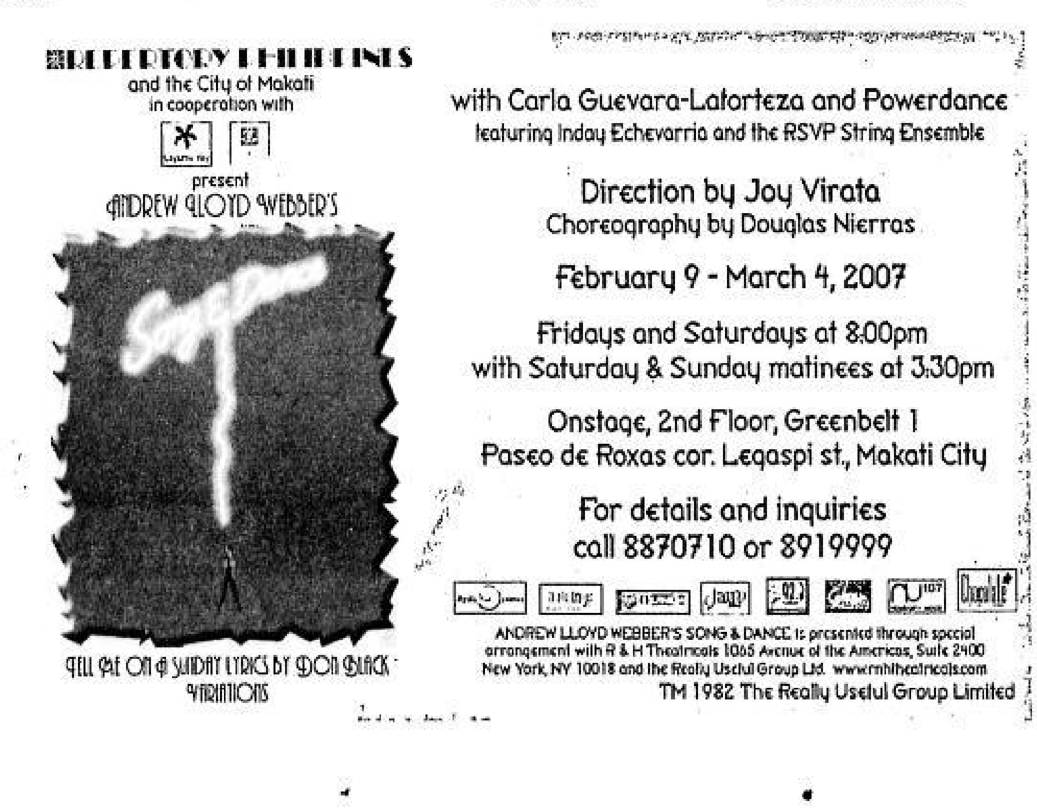

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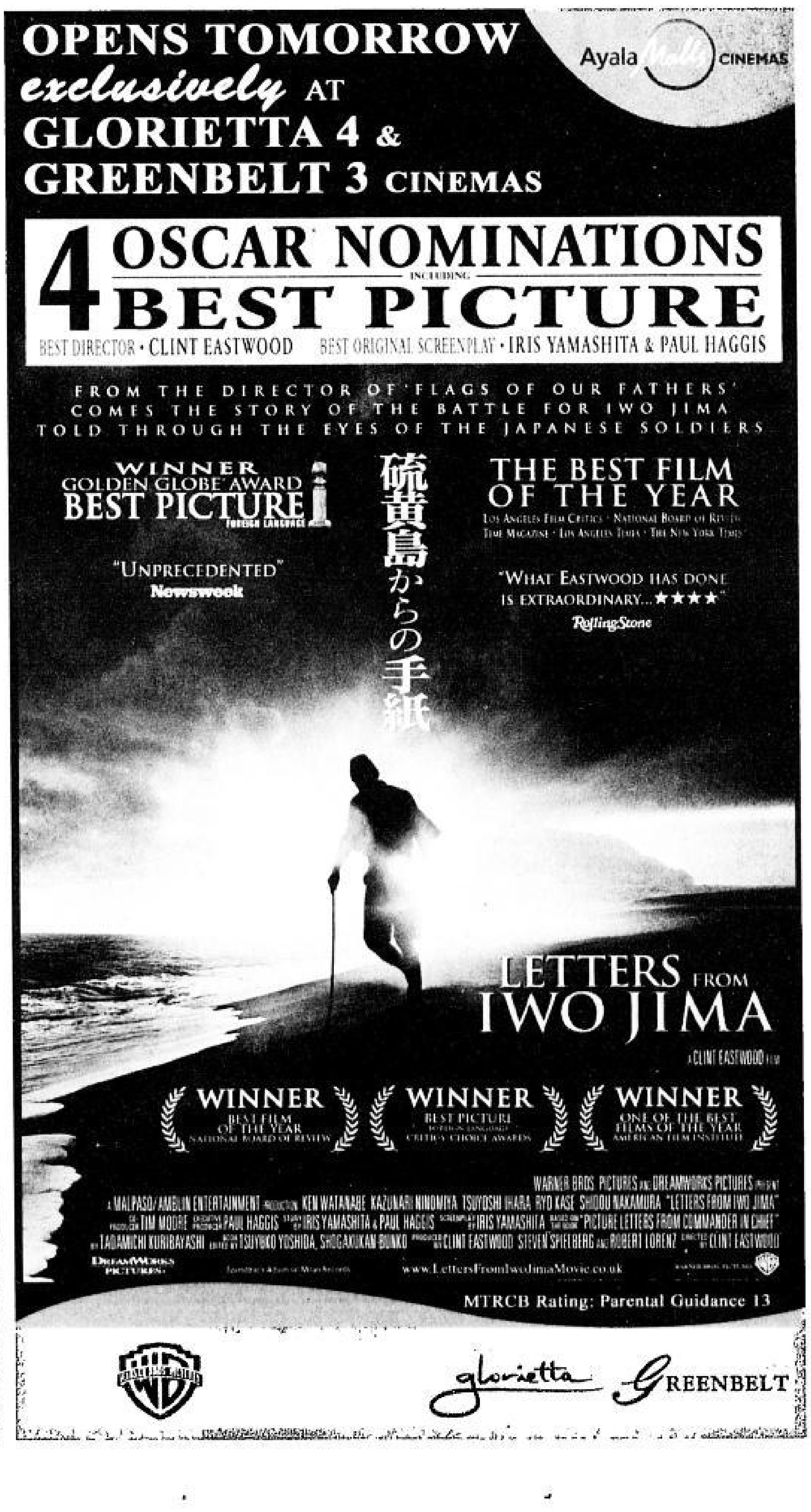

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Female suicide bomber kills 40 at Baghdad college's gate

WOMEN grieve as they wait to claim the body of a relative who was killed in a suicide bomb attack at the Baghdad Economy and Administration College Feb. 25. REUTERS

BAGHDAD—IRAQI PRESIDENT Jalal Talabani underwent hospital tests in Jordan on Monday after suffering fatigue and dehydration, as insurgents defied a security operation and bombed his war-weary capital.

Eight Iraqis were killed in bomb and mortar attacks in and around Baghdad during the morning rush hour, one day after a female suicide bomber slaughtered 40 people outside the city's business school.

Nevertheless, US commanders expressed cautious optimism that a 12-day-old security plan had begun to make progress, and reported that violence was down despite al-Qaida attempts to find new tactics to defeat the operation.

"It will take time," said Brig. Gen. John Campbell, commander of the US forces working with Iraqi police and troops in "Operation Fardh al-Qanoon" (Enforcing the Law), according to a statement.

"It's still too early to talk trends. Still, Iraqi and coalition commanders at all levels remain cautiously optimistic," he said, adding that bomb attacks have declined by more than 20 percent since Feb. 14.

Violence continues, however, and eight Iraqis were killed on Monday before the capital's shell-shocked populace had even started work.

Two policemen were killed when their early morning patrol was bombed in the southeastern district of Rustumiyah, a security official said. Another officer was wounded.

A bomb targeting another police patrol in the Madaen region southeast of the capital killed three policemen and injured two, the official said.

A mortar shell slammed into a street corner in downtown Baghdad and killed a woman and a man, he added.

Police said a man was killed and his daughter injured when gunmen attacked their vehicle on the highway near Latifiya, some 40 km south of Baghdad.

The latest deaths came as residents digested the news that a female suicide bomber had carried out Sunday's attack on students at Mustansiriyah University's School of Economy and Administration in eastern Baghdad.

More than 40 people were killed and 55 were wounded when she detonated a bomb packed with ball bearings at the school entrance when it was crowded with young men and women attending exams.

Female suicide bombers, while not unheard of, are rare in Iraq, and the attack was the subject of anguished commentary on television.

For American commanders, the increased use of pedestrian suicide bombers rather than car bombs is a sign that Sunni insurgents are adapting to the initial successes of the security plan and modifying their tactics.

"Al-Qaida in Iraq remains determined to drive the country into further violence," General Campbell's statement said. "As their freedom of movement throughout Baghdad is reduced, al-Qaida has resorted to the use of suicide vest attacks against innocent civilian gatherings."

The US statement also confirmed that the Mahdi Army, the Shiite militia loyal to radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, appears to have gone to ground during the security push.

Meanwhile, President Talabani was suffering from extreme exhaustion and dehydration but is in high spirits and his life is not in danger, his office said.

Talabani, Iraq's 74-year-old Kurdish leader, was flown from his hometown in northern Iraq to the Jordanian capital Amman on Sunday after falling ill, and underwent tests at the King Hussein Medical Center. *AFP*

Farrakhan, in final address, calls for impeachment of Bush

FARRAKHAN at the Nation of Islam's Saviour's Day convention Feb. 25. AFP

DETROIT—NATION OF ISLAM leader Louis Farrakhan on Sunday angrily denounced the war in Iraq and called for the impeachment of US President George W. Bush in an appearance billed as his final public address.

"What should they do about a man who has been lying to America?" Farrakhan said. Then, turning to face Rep. John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat who chairs the House Judiciary Committee and shared the stage in Detroit, he added: "If you won't impeach him, sanction him."

Farrakhan, 73, was released from a hospital last month after undergoing a 12-hour abdominal surgery related to prostate cancer.

There had been widespread speculation Farrakhan would use what supporters called a farewell speech to name a successor or to shift his movement closer to mainstream Islam. But Farrakhan instead devoted much of a wide-ranging, two-hour address to a critique of Bush's foreign policy, which he linked to the prophecy of the apocalypse.

"Why did they invade Iraq? Why did they kill Saddam? Why did they kill his sons?" Farrakhan said. "The real story is Saddam Hussein became an economic threat."

He compared America's decision to go to war with Iraq as being as one-sided as former boxing great Muhammad Ali, a black Muslim, "fighting a quadriplegic." But he said the war had touched off a cycle of violence that would end with "cities destroyed ... not by a terrorist but by God."

Farrakhan also said the United States had no right to deny nuclear power to Iran, saying, "International law says Iran has that right." *Reuters*

Doctors taking a second look at heart bypasses

SOME DOCTORS SAY IT MAY BE time to give bypass operations a second look, including some cardiologists who specialize in the far more popular alternative—using stents to keep coronary arteries propped open.

No one is predicting a sudden surge back to bypass, which is still a far more invasive and initially riskier way to treat plaque-clogged heart arteries, a condition that afflicts millions of Americans.

But in light of new safety concerns over the long-term risks of stents, as well as accumulating data indicating that the sickest heart patients may live longer if they receive bypass surgery instead, some well-known stent specialists say the pendulum may have swung too far away from bypass surgery.

"We as cardiologists have probably pressed forward on stent technology a little faster than we should have," said Dr. Kirk Garratt, the director of research into stents and related heart therapies at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, one of the nation's leading stent-implanting centers.

It is a remarkable acknowledgment, considering the medical and financial stakes in play.

In the last decade, the number of bypass surgeries in this country has fallen by a third—to about 365,000 last year. Meanwhile, the number of patients receiving stents has soared, to nearly a million in 2006.

To some extent, the preference for stents has been propelled by patients themselves, who have an understandable aversion to major surgery.

But stents are also big business, with powerful advocates like Boston Scientific and Johnson & Johnson, whose stent sales totaled about $2.9 billion last year.

And cardiologists, the specialists who are most likely to diagnose artery disease, are in many cases also the same doctors who implant stents. Their judgment heavily influences which patients are put in contact with surgeons.

What has changed most recently in the stents-versus-surgery calculus is new evidence that surfaced in clinical trials last year. The data disclosed a previously undetected risk with stents, which are tiny mesh cylinders that are placed in arteries with filament-thin catheters threaded from a tiny incision in the thigh.

The new evidence showed that patients receiving the most popular form of stents—ones coated with drugs to reduce the likelihood that the artery will close again—have a slight risk of forming potentially fatal blood clots in the stents long after they have been implanted. *NYT*

STEREOPHONIC RECORDER

An employee for Japanese electronics giant Sony, displays the company's new IC recorder "ICD-SX77," which enables high-quality stereo recording with triple ultra-sensitive microphones and built-in 1GB flash memory for 17 hours of CD-comparable bandwidth high-quality stereo recording, or 375 hours mono recording, Feb. 26. Sony will put it on the market in March with an estimated price of 25,000 yen ($210). AFP

Muslim ministers urge Palestinian settlement

ISLAMABAD—SEVEN MUSLIM foreign ministers said on Sunday the Palestinian problem had to be resolved without delay and the standoff over Iran's nuclear program must be worked out through diplomacy.

The foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt and Jordan, and the chief of the Organization of the Islamic Conference met in the Pakistani capital to prepare for an Islamic summit aimed at ending turmoil in the Middle East.

After the talks, Pakistani Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri said they needed more deliberations before their summit in Saudi Arabia. No date has been set for the meeting.

The idea for a summit of Islamic countries has been championed by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf who has long said the Palestinian conflict was the root of terrorism.

Musharraf, whose government does not recognize Israel but has held talks with the Jewish state, has recently expressed gloom about the problems besetting the Middle East.

He has urged a new initiative in talks during visits to several Muslim countries over the past few weeks, including Syria and Iran, although they were not represented at Sunday's talks.

Referring to clashes between Palestinian factions, Kasuri said it was heart-rending to see Palestinians killing Palestinians while sectarian violence in Iraq was "horrendous."

"We have seen deterioration and that has alarmed us," he said.

The seven ministers said the Palestinian question should be resolved on the basis of UN resolutions and initiatives that recognized the need for a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"The foreign ministers reiterated the view that the Palestinian question is the central and core problem in the Middle East and it must be resolved without delay," they said in a statement. *Reuters*

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

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KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 18/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Young Park	General Manager, Contract Department
YAMAN LAHI FOUNDATION, INC.– EMILIO AGUINALDO COLLEGE 1113-1117 cor. San Marcelino St. and Gonzales St., Ermita, Manila	Vinod Kumar Thakur	Visiting Lecturer / Researcher
POLARIS 123 INC. 405 El Grande Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Soonlye Kang (w/o Kim)	Production Manager
FIRST CAGAYAN LEISURE AND RESORTCORPORATION 26/F West Tower, PSE Center Exchange Rd., Ortigas Center Pasig City	Rudy Widjaja	Technical Assistant to the Office of the President for Sports Development
FIRST CAGAYAN LEISURE AND RESORTCORPORATION 26/F West Tower, PSE Center Exchange Rd., Ortigas Center Pasig City	Tiek Ming Kwee	Technical Assistant to the Office of the President for Sports Development
GOODYEAR PHILIPPINES, INC. Alabang / Zapote Road, Brgy. Almanza, Las Pinas City	David Joseph Morin	President
DELL INTERNATIONAL SERVICES PHILIPPINES, INC. 27/F RCBC Plaza Tower 2, Makati City	Teresa Anne Vannoy	Director, HR
EASTERN HAWAII LEISURE COMPANY LIMITED G/F Grand Blvd. Hotel, 1990 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Jianyuan Wang	Casino Shift Manager
EASTERN HAWAII LEISURE COMPANY LIMITED G/F Grand Blvd. Hotel, 1990 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Yu Ai	Table Supervisor
EASTERN HAWAII LEISURE COMPANY LIMITED G/F Grand Blvd. Hotel, 1990 Roxas Blvd., Malate, Manila	Juan Du	Table Supervisor
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US stepping up covert operations inside Iran

WASHINGTON—THE UNited States is stepping up covert operations in Iran in a new strategy that risks sparking an "open confrontation" and benefits Sunni radicals, The New Yorker reported Sunday.

In the magazine, Seymour Hersh reports that US military and special-operations teams have increased their activities inside Iran, entering from Iraq to gather intelligence and to pursue Iranians who operate inside Iraq.

Hersh also reports, citing unnamed sources, that the US defense department recently formed a special planning group to plan possible attacks on Iran "that can be implemented, upon orders from the president, within 24 hours."

The planning group, though, has in the past month turned its focus from targeting Iran's nuclear sites and attempting to oust the current Tehran leadership to hitting targets "involved in supplying or aiding militants in Iraq."

Hersh said US clandestine operations in Iran, Lebanon and Syria aim at strengthening Saudi-supported Sunni Islam groups and weakening Iran-backed Shiites.

He said that since last August US-led forces in Iraq have been rounding up Iranians there to be interrogated, and were at one point holding 500—though some were just humanitarian and aid workers.

The operations under the new tack have been guided by Vice President Dick Cheney and rely heavily on Saudi Arabia's national security adviser Prince Bandar bin Sultan, according to the report.

However, Hersh said, "a by-product of these activities has been the bolstering of Sunni extremist groups that espouse a militant vision of Islam and are hostile to America and sympathetic to al-Qaida."

ULTRA Jewish Orthodox boys attend a special prayer calling for the death of Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a religious school in Jerusalem, Feb. 25. AP

"The 'redirection,' as some inside the White House call the new strategy, has brought the United States closer to an open confrontation with Iran and, in parts of the region, propelled it into a widening sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims."

Some US aid distributed to Sunni groups in Lebanon falls into the hands of radical groups, US, European and Arab officials told Hersh, who named Fatah al-Islam, based in a refugee camp in northern Lebanon, and Asbat al-Answar in a Palestinian refugee camp in the country as beneficiaries.

The article also suggested the US policy was benefiting the radical Sunni Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, and that influential Lebanese politician Walid Jumblatt had encouraged US support for the group in a meeting late last year with Cheney.

But unnamed officials told Hersh that the approach was dangerous, enhancing radical groups which also consider the United States an enemy.

"We're spreading the money around as much as we can," a former senior intelligence official said.

"In this process, we're financing a lot of bad guys with some serious potential unintended consequences. ... It's a very high-risk venture."

In some cases, the clandestine operations rely on Saudi Arabia and Bandar, who was the ambassador to Washington for two decades, to provide the funding so that operations remain secret.

Hersh wrote that, according to one source, a government consultant, Bandar and the Saudi government have assured Washington that they will keep any dangerous Sunni groups potentially strengthened by the new policy under control.

Hersh said, however, that one of the key Shiite targets of US policy in the Middle East, Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah—which Washington says is directed by Tehran—said it opposed a sectarian Islamic conflict and was willing to talk with the United States.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah told Hersh in an interview that he believed the US, together with Israel, was trying to split Islam, and to partition Iraq, Syria and Lebanon.

However, he said: "If the United States says that discussions with the likes of us can be useful and influential in determining American policy in the region, we have no objection to talks or meetings." *AFP*

West eyes tougher Iran sanctions

LONDON—RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE and arms for Iran were likely to be considered at a Monday meeting of diplomats from the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany, as the world powers seek new ways to pressure Tehran to suspend parts of its nuclear program.

Senior representatives of the six nations were to meet at London's Foreign Office to discuss how to respond to Iran's failure to respect a UN deadline to halt its uranium enrichment work.

The UN's nuclear watchdog agency confirmed Thursday that Iran had ignored a Security Council ultimatum to freeze enrichment—a possible pathway to nuclear arms—and had instead expanded its program.

A senior British diplomat who will be attending Monday's meeting said diplomats would examine options for further sanctions, including whittling away at lucrative export credits Iran receives from Europe in support of trade. Restrictions on arms exports to Iran are also likely to be discussed, said the diplomat.

The US and its European allies have been urging Iran to halt its nascent enrichment program and reenter negotiations meant to ease concerns that Tehran could be intending to use its civilian nuclear power program as a cover to produce weapons. Iran has refused to give up enrichment, and insists its only interest in the technology is for the production of fuel for nuclear power plants.

The British official said there was evidence that the Security Council's adoption of limited economic sanctions against Iran in December had begun to show success.

The Dec. 23 resolution ordered all countries to stop supplying Iran with materials and technology that could contribute to its nuclear and missile programs and to freeze assets of 10 key Iranian companies and 12 individuals related to those programs. *AP*

Bush to send severe note to Musharraf

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush has decided to send an unusually tough message to one of his most important allies, President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, warning him that the newly Democratic Congress could cut aid to his country unless his forces became far more aggressive in hunting down operatives with al-Qaida, senior administration officials say.

The decision came after the White House concluded that Musharraf is failing to live up to commitments he made to Bush during a visit here in September. Musharraf insisted then, both in private and public, that a peace deal he struck with tribal leaders in one of the country's most lawless border areas would not diminish the hunt for the leaders of al-Qaida and the Taliban or their training camps.

Now, American intelligence officials have concluded that the terrorist infrastructure is being rebuilt, and that while Pakistan has attacked some camps, its overall effort has flagged.

"He's made a number of assurances over the past few months, but the bottom line is that what they are doing now is not working," one senior administration official said. "The message we're sending to him now is that the only thing that matters is results." *NYT*

GANDER BATTLE

Spectators watch a goose fight in the northern Serbian village of Mokrin, some 160 km from Belgrade, Feb. 25. The two ganders fight until one gives up and retreats. REUTERS

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Chot's squad 'better than RP's Asiad five'

RETURNEES: Asi Taulava, seen here defending against China's Yao Ming in this file photo of the 2002 Busan Asiad, and Dondon Hontiveros (bottom left) are also part of the new national team under coach Chot Reyes. AFP

By June Navarro

WHEN IT COMES TO COMPARING THE NEWLY formed Philippine basketball team with its 2002 predecessor, no one is better qualified than former national coach Jong Uichico.

The Barangay Ginebra head coach called the shots for the RP five, also made up of PBA stars, in the 2002 Busan Asian Games, the last significant international tournament for the national dribblers before the country was suspended by the International Basketball Federation or Fiba.

And though there is a thin line dividing the two RP teams in terms of composition, Uichico said there's no doubt that the squad now under Chot Reyes is a lot better.

"I have no legitimate backup point guard back then," said Uichico, whose team fell short of the bronze in the 2002 Asiad after yielding to eventual gold medalist South Korea in the semifinals and to Kazakhstan in the battle for third.

"The team now is more flexible," added Uichico. "Except for Asi (Taulava) and Mick (Pennisi), all the players could move up and down from their respective positions."

Olsen Racela was the only legitimate point guard in the 2002 lineup, forcing Uichico to utilize either Jeffrey Cariaso or Noy Castillo as backup court generals. In the PBA, Castillo and Cariaso are more comfortable playing off-guard.

Now, Reyes has the luxury of alternating Jimmy Alapag and Jayjay Helterbrand at the point. He also has a deeper two-guard rotation with Mark Caguioa, Dondon Hontiveros and Renren Ritualo around.

Uichico said these men could switch from one position to the other with relative ease, aside from being gifted with excellent shooting touch.

Comparing Racela to Alapag and Helterbrand Uichico said there is also a huge disparity in terms of speed.

The present team, however, will be more vertically challenged than the previous one.

Aside from the 6-foot-9 Taulava and Pennisi, that 2002 team also had 6-9 Andy Seigle, 6-6 Eric Menk and Dennis Espino and 6-5 Danny Ildefonso.

Reyes will rely on 6-4 Rudy Hatfield, 6-5 Kerby Raymundo and 6-4 Ranidel De Ocampo to help Taulava and Pennisi man the slot. Danny Seigle (6-7) and Tony Dela Cruz (6-4) are expected to be more active in the wings.

"Forming a big lineup is actually a misconception because even if we go big, we're not going to be that big compared to China, South Korea and even the Middle East countries," said Uichico, who helped Reyes form the new team together with Alaska coach Tim Cone and Norman Black.

"If you ask me, the size of the team is enough. It's actually a team which could also press and put premium on outside shots without necessarily sacrificing size."

Uichico predicted that the present squad could make it to the 2008 Beijing Olympics given the proper training and the right breaks. "I believe we have a good shot at qualifying," he said.

As host, China automatic gains an Olympic slot, leaving such tough countries as Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Qatar, Jordan and the Philippines to fight for the top two spots in the Fiba-Asia championships.

PBL nixes apprentice draft for stars in PBA

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE MARQUEE AMATEUR PLAYERS WON'T be making their pro league debut just yet.

The apprentice program got the thumbs down from the PBL yesterday, leaving the PBA with no big names on the list when it conducts the apprentice draft on March 1.

"It's not workable and it's not applicable at this point," said PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, citing the pull-out of several collegiate players by their respective schools and the live contracts of other key players.

At press time, 24 players, mostly from the Visayas and Mindanao, have signed up for the apprentice draft, which was originally set for today at the PBA office.

The PBA wants to lure the likes of JC Intal, Ken Bono, Mark Borboran, Marvin Cruz and Jason Castro to fill the slots vacated by the 12 pro cagers tapped to join the national team recently formed by coach Chot Reyes.

Through the apprentice program, the country's top amateur players—most of whom are playing in the PBL—get a chance to see action in the pro league without passing through the regular rookie draft.

"Our league will already suffer greatly from the proposed pull-out of several college players by their school teams preparing for their upcoming collegiate campaigns," Trinidad said in a letter sent to PBA commissioner Noli Eala yesterday.

"Losing 10 to 12 more 'named' players [in the apprentice program] will greatly cripple our second conference competition and hamper our marketing thrusts."

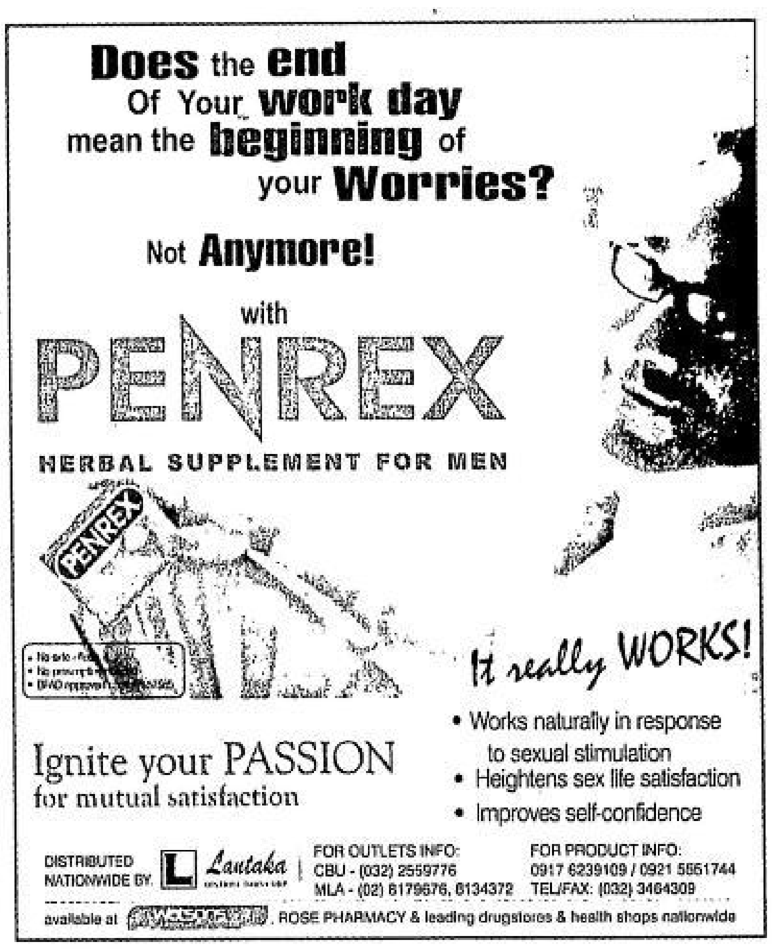
Magnolia, for instance, will be left with only nine players as school partner San Beda nixed its tie-up for the next PBL conference, which will kick off on March 24.

"The San Beda team will be leaving for the States in May," said Lions interim coach Frankie Lim. "All the players will be attending a training camp."

Five standouts from the University of the East, including Fantastic Freshman Mark Borboran, won't be suiting up too in the next conference.

"The school and team officials, and even the players themselves, agreed that it's best

PBL/ A22



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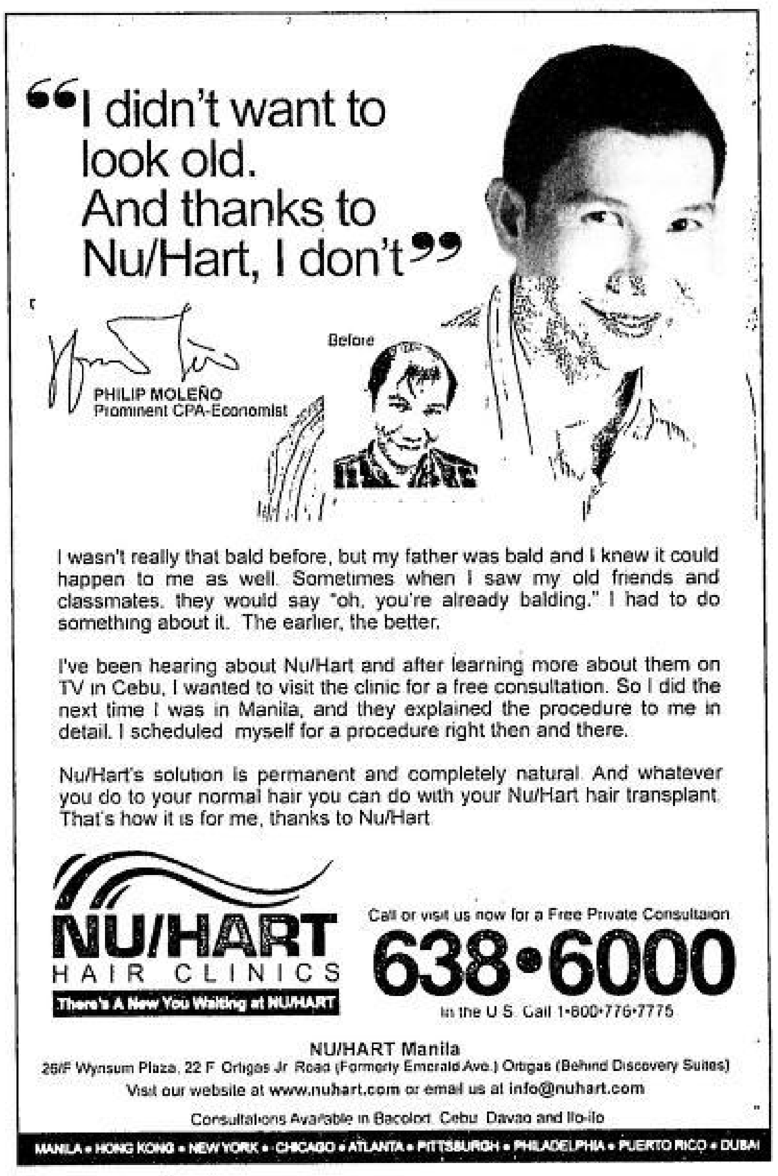

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Prominent CPA-Economist

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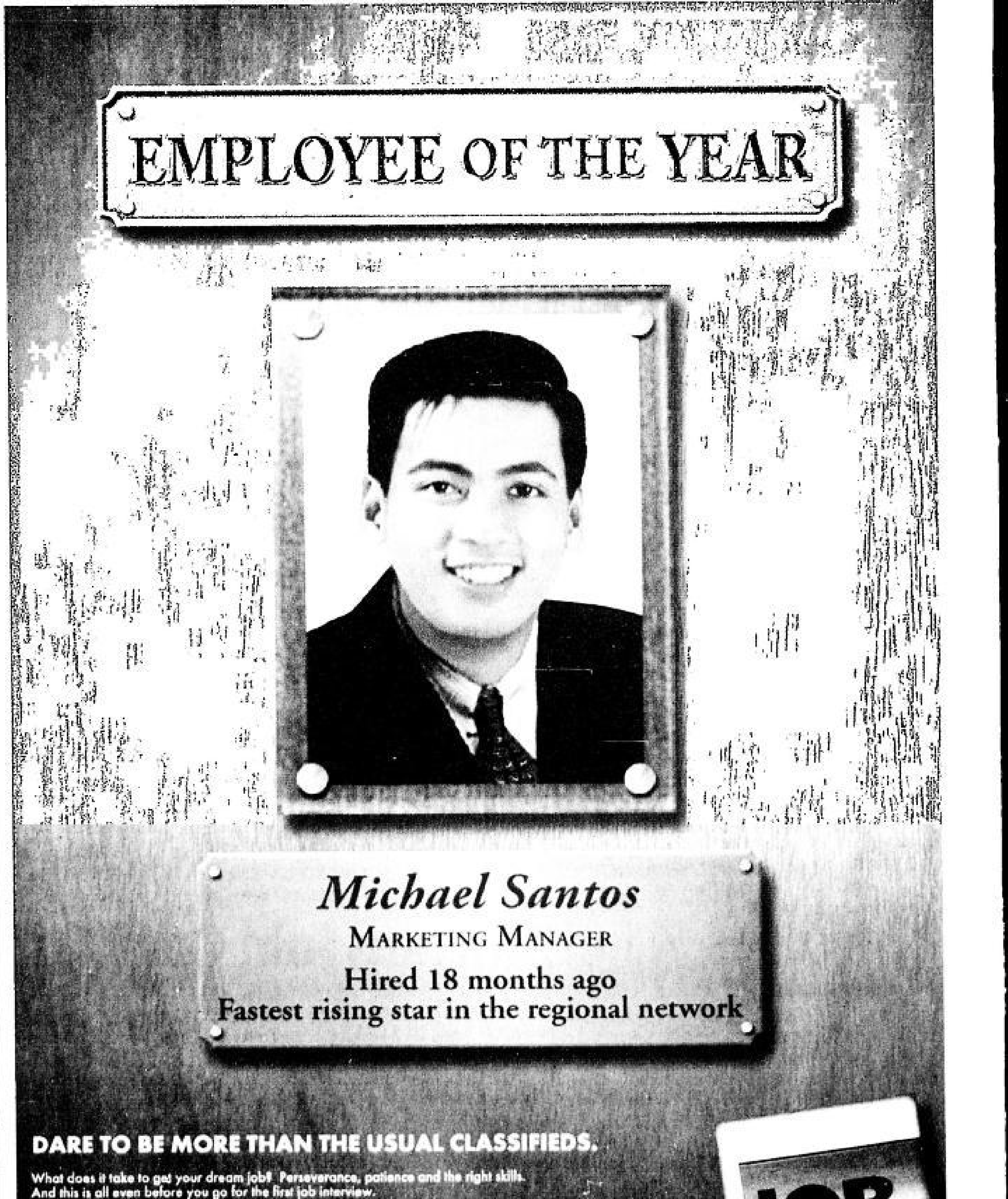

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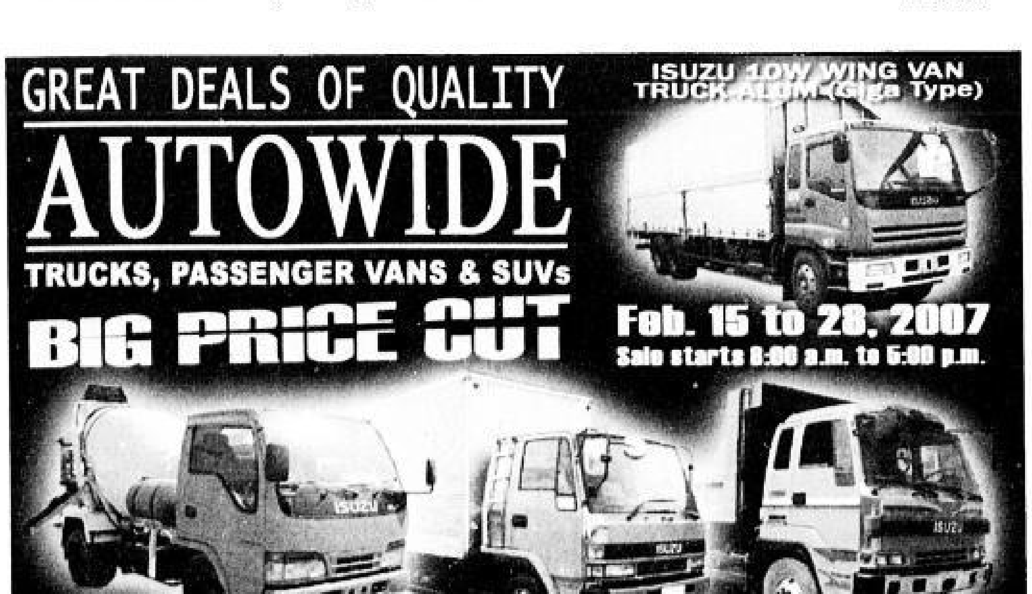

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PSC readies ₱50M for SEA Games

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION IS PREPARED TO SPEND ABOUT P50 million for the 24th Southeast Asian Games in Thailand this December.

The figure was based on what the agency spent during the 2003 Vietnam SEAG where the Philippines sent nearly 500 athletes and coaches and finished fourth place overall.

While it is the job of the SEAG Task Force to determine the number of athletes, PSC chair Butch Ramirez said he expects the final roster to approximate the RP SEAG contingent in Vietnam.

By his own estimate, Ramirez said the agency would spend P100,000 representing the plane fare and hotel accommodation of each delegation member.

"Thailand is almost the same distance as Vietnam, so basically, the plane fare would be the same," said Ramirez.

The Philippines captured 48 gold medals on top of 54 silvers and 75 bronzes during the Vietnam SEAG, before clinching the overall championship for the first time two years later in Manila.

Ramirez said Thailand is bent on grabbing the overall title, especially with the host's prerogative of including and excluding some sports disciplines which the Philippines dominated in the Manila SEA Games.

Nevertheless, the country will be pulling all stops in trying to repeat its 2005 romp when it won 113 gold medals to beat the Thais.

"The training of the national athletes starts next month," said Ramirez.

Task Force co-chair and PSC commissioner Richie Garcia earlier said the number of athletes and coaches to be sent to Thailand would be determined first before it makes a recommendation for the budget.

'MYG on the Road' program up

GRASSROOTS SPORTS DEVELOPMENT in Manila has been made possible through the Inner City Development Committee chaired by Arnold "Ali" Atienza, who also heads the Manila Sports Council (Masco).

From free lessons in various sports disciplines to free coaching and trainers' seminars, the Inner City Development Committee has gone down into the city's barangays to propagate the values of sports aside from the improvement and lighting of more than 140 kilometers of alleys and roads.

The program is dubbed the "MY Games on the Road," according to the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Free taekwondo lessons from qualified instructors from the Masco are being given to hundreds of in and out-of-school children in four of the city's five sports complexes in Dapitan, San Andres, Tondo and Patricia.

Swimming lessons are also continuously being provided to public elementary students in city government-owned pools in the Tondo and Dapitan Sports Complexes, as well as at the Bagong Buhay in Paco.

Campo: Home is where the heart is

By Roy Luarca

HE ARRIVED WITH A NECK BRACE, STRAPPED INTO A wheelchair and accompanied by a Turkish doctor Saturday night. He could barely talk.

But Florencio Campomanes, even after a long flight, could still afford to smile. After surviving a 7 1/2-hour operation and being confined in a hospital in Turkey for more than three weeks following a car accident, he was glad to be home.

Even if he had to be whisked off to the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang, Muntinlupa, for more diagnosis and recuperation, Campomanes, several pounds lighter, felt invigorated seeing familiar faces and hearing familiar voices.

The honorary president of the World Chess Federation (Fide) misses everything Filipino after enduring post-trauma depression and being forced to celebrate his 80th birthday on Tuesday at the Antalya Anadolu Hospital in Turkey.

Now, the long road to full recovery begins.

And with his sporty lifestyle—he walks briskly and plays tennis almost daily—it's the incapacity to do his routine that's hurting Campomanes the most. Now, he subsists on liquefied food.

Pretty soon, he'll also feel the strain on his wallet.

Toti Abundo, the Philippine representative to the Fide who flew into town with Campomanes, said the medical insurance coverage of the Fide president from 1982 to 1995 ended when he left the Turkish hospital.

It was there on Feb. 1 when Campomanes was operated on for multiple cervical spine fractures he sustained after the chauffeur-driven car bringing him to the airport for the return trip to Manila turned turtle in the slippery, snow-covered road.

Because the accident occurred after he attended the Fide presidential board meeting, Campomanes' medical expenses were shouldered by the Turkey Chess Federation. That arrangement was made possible by Fide president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, Campomanes' protege in the world federation.

Abundo said Campomanes needs to spend a few more days at the hospital before doctors can determine whether he can continue therapy at home.

Of course, the National Chess Federation of the Philippines is ready to help.

NCFP secretary general Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino was on hand to greet Campomanes on his arrival at the Naia.

NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay also expressed elation over Campomanes' return.

"I wish he gets well right away," said the senatorial candidate. "Chess needs him."

Such soothing words, for sure, will be music to Campomanes' ears.

FLORENCIO Campomanes is greeted on his arrival from Turkey by national chess federation secretary general Abraham Tolentino (right). "Campo" was accompanied by Toti Abundo (second from right) and a Turkish doctor.

Bautista may be featured in Oscar fight

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

CEBU CITY—REY "BOOM BOOM" BAUTISTA may yet get the chance to become the other fighter in the chief supporting bout for the huge May 5 showdown between Oscar De La Hoya and Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Golden Boy Promotions vice president and international matchmaker Eric Gomez has confirmed yesterday Bautista's inclusion in the card, which experts say has a good chance of breaking previous pay-per-view records.

"Bautista is already assured of a slot in that card, along with (Alex John) Banal," Gomez said. Banal is also undefeated like Boom Boom.

Gomez finalized the plans through a long-distance conversations with Golden Boy president Oscar De La Hoya and CEO Richard Schaefer, where it was decided that Bautista will be included in three bouts to be shown worldwide.

"Boom Boom might have a chance in the main supporting (bout) to Oscar," said Bautista's manager Michael Aldeguer in a message yesterday.

The event, dubbed "The World Awaits," is being touted as the biggest event in boxing history. It has already broken all live gate records in Las Vegas.

Gomez, however, clarified that another Filipino fighter Jimrex Jaca, may not be included in the card, saying that a bout with Oscar Larios is not possible since the Mexican is the mandatory challenger to WBC champion In jin Chi.

"Jaca and Larios might get a chance to fight down the road, but not on May 5," Gomez said.

The GBP executive added that it was Jaca who approached him and asked for a chance to be in the May 5 card.

Where did horse trainers' money go?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I WAS DISHEARTENED TO KNOW THAT, despite its huge income, the Philippine Race Horse Trainers Association could not even meet the basic needs of its members, including their hospitalization expenses. According to reports, while the association earned more than P16 million from the two racing clubs, it could not even settle the hospital bills of its members amounting to as low as P4,000. How come?

According to the same report, association officials often avail themselves of the services of a caterer during board meetings, unmindful of the expenses. Some members are also inquiring what has happened to their housing project.

* * *

Leaving nothing to chance, an all-pro team was named recently by national coach Chot Reyes to take part in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) championship in May as part of the country's preparations for a possible stint in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Named to the all-pro team were Rudy Hatfield, Mark Caguioa and Jay-Jay Helterbrand of newly crowned PBA Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup champion Barangay Ginebra, Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros of San Miguel Beer, Tony dela Cruz of Alaska, Ranidel de Ocampo of Air21, Asi Taulava, Jimmy Alapag and Ren-Ren Ritualo of Talk 'N Text, Kerby Raymundo of Purefoods and Mick Pennisi of Red Bull.

Officials led by BAP-Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas president Manuel V. Pangilinan had also batted for an all-pro team to the Seaba and other international events in a bid to crash next year's Olympics following the long-awaited Fiba lifting of the country's suspension.

"I am also for an all-pro squad," said Junjun Capistrano of the UAAP. "We must field the best possible team to the Seaba because it's an important tournament leading to the Olympic qualifying in July."

Capistrano is a member of a five-man selection committee composed of PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, Air21 president Lito Alvarez, Tanduay's Wilson Young and the BAP's Christian Tan.

"Our Southeast Asian neighbors are moving heaven and earth to improve and beat us, so we should not take them for granted. They are all-out when it comes to funding their respective national basketball teams," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

In batting for an all-pro team, Pangilinan said the Philippines should not take the Seaba tournament lightly.

"I've expressed my views to them (selection committee) that the Philippines is participating internationally for the first time in a long while. Secondly, we have to remove any item of uncertainty that we may not win because you can't discount the fact that other Asean nations are probably beefing up their own national teams. So why take a chance?"

* * *

Ten World Pool Championship slots will be disputed in the Guinness Asian 9-Ball Tour (formerly the San Miguel Tour) on April 20-22 in Jakarta.

"We're not reducing the number of slots for the WPC. There had been reports saying that Matchroom Sport will prune down the WPC slots at stake in the tour, citing the small volume of participants, but it is not true," Luke Riches, spokesman of the organizing Matchroom Sport announced recently.

This year's edition will be the biggest ever with six legs and a total prize money of $320,000 (about P16 million) at stake.

SPORTSWATCH

Lao downs Alina for Milo 16-under title

SAN PABLO CITY— CHADI LAO BESTED PEMRIK ALINA, 6-0, 6-4, TO BAG the boys' 16-under title and then routed Raymark Santiago, 6-1, 6-2, to cop the 8-under crown of the 2007 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop on Sunday at the Alina Tennis Center here. Chadi's younger brother, Cholo, downed 10-under champion Jed Olivarez, 6-2, 6-3, for the boys' 12-under title. The Laos shared the limelight with Olivarez—who blasted Lean Marquez, 6-0, 6-1, to win a first-ever Milo title in the unisex 10-under—and Rex Enrico Brinas, Terry Padilla, Jamie Cura and Chynna Mamawal. Brinas routed Ronnel Santiago, 6-3, 6-0, for the boys' 14-under plum. Padilla blanked Jana Exconde, 6-0, 6-0, in the girls' 12-under; Cura tripped Princess Cabrera, 7-5, 6-1, in the girls' 14-under; Mamawal routed Pamela Manzano, 6-0, 6-2, in the girls' 16-under; and Kate Padilla, 6-2, 6-4, in the girls' 18-under.

Centennial Golf Classic tees off today

A HUNDRED-FIFTY PLAYERS TEE UP TODAY IN THE CENTENNIAL GOLF Classic organized by Lodge Perla del Oriente No. 1034, Grand Lodge of Scotland, at the Tagaytay Midlands Golf Course. The event kicks off the centenary celebrations of the lodge in November, marking the 100 years of Scottish Freemasonry in the Philippines. The 18-hole tournament tees off a t 8 a.m., shotgun-style. The Right Worshipful Master, Ben Tan, the centennial lodge Master, designated Tom Rogaciano, Henry Cheng, Tony Co, Gil Menudo, Robert Sing and Pravin Sharma as members of the organizing committee, with Jose B. Abejo as project consultant. Autohub is donating a Hyundai Getz car as a hole-in-one prize. Prizes will be raffled off during the awards rite.

Asian BMX riders due for extreme tilt

SOME OF THE REGION'S TOP BMX RIDERS ARE SEEING ACTION IN THE Red Horse-Urge Asian BMX Pro Jam on March 3 at the Westgate, Automall Parking Area, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. The extreme sports competition, sponsored by Urge Media Group and Red Horse Beer, features Pro BMX Stunt talents from Malaysia and the Philippines led by Southeast Asia's No. 1 rider Armand Mariano. Other events include the BMX Flatland and BMX Box Jump competitions. A rock concert featuring Urbandub, Kjwan, Eyescream and Hardboiledeggz will be held during the event.

Fistorama features 3 amateur bouts

FISTORAMA FEATURES THREE AMATEUR FIGHTS ON RPN-9 STARTING AT 3 p.m. today. The bouts are part of the PCSO Amateur Boxing Championships held recently at the Cantada Sports Center in Bagumbayan, Taguig City. Fistorama is shown worldwide twice weekly through ABS-CBN Global's The Filipino Channel/Pinoy Channel. Golf Power Plus airs at 4 p.m. featuring the 2007 Women's Inter-Collegiate Beach Volleyball Challenge. Lyceum Team 2 faces Adamson University Team 1.

Jackpot prizes in National Rambulan

WINNERS IN THE UPCOMING NATIONAL RAMBULAN 8-COCK DERBY, A super event to be staged in 23 cockpits nationwide, stand to receive a windfall of prizes, according to organizers Rodolfo Pineda and Butch Nunez of San Juan Coliseum. The guaranteed prizes are as follows: champion/s, P6 million; any seven pointer, P1 million; any six pointer, P2 million; any five pointer, P1 million; handler, P350,000 and gaffer, P150,000. A 2-cock National Rambulan elimination will be staged today at Mabuhay Cockpit in San Fernando City, Pampanga, with Val Lagman and Mayor Carmelo Lazatin as hosts.

PBL nixes . . .

From page A21

to focus on our UAAP preparation," said UE coach Dindo Pumaren.

Trinidad said other players like Intal and Bono cannot just disregard their PBL contracts.

"They are under contract with their mother teams, they cannot leave early," said Trinidad.

Trinidad, though, stressed that the apprentice program is still an "excellent concept."

"It's not that we don't want it," said Trinidad. "If it's for a national program, we will never think twice of helping and supporting. But in this situation, we, more than the PBA, will suffer. The shortage of our players is so much that if we release our players, it will throw the entire conference into disarray."

70 teams join Corp Cup roster

BAGUIO CITY—A TOTAL OF 70 LOCAL AND international teams, comprising 280 players, have so far confirmed participation in the 19th Philippine Corporate Cup slated March 5 to 8 at the pine tree-lined layout of the Camp John Hay Golf Club.

Tournament chair and Camp John Hay general manager Jeric Hechanova said that the executive committee has extended the registration to accommodate more teams. He said he expects some 30 more squads to join the annual event before the deadline ends late this week.

"After the Philippine Airlines Interclub, most of the golfers look forward to the Corporate Cup," Hechanova said.

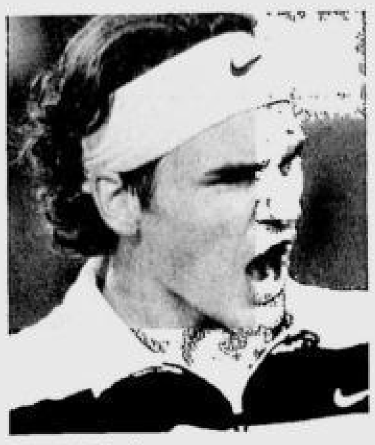
Entry fee for each team is P45,000 inclusive of two rooms at the Camp John Hay Manor Hotel for four nights and one practice round.

Hechanova said there will also be set activities every night starting with the welcome dinner on March 5 at the CJH Manor Hotel, bonfire dinner at the Art Park-Filling Station on March 6, barbecue dinner at the CJH Manor Garden and awards dinner at the CAP Convention Center on March 8.

Participating teams will be composed of four players. They will be classified into five groups, including the seniors, based on the three of four players with the lowest handicap indices. The Molave scoring system will be used.

Members of the National Golf Association of the Philippines' training pool for the past three years will get an automatic zero handicap.

Federer rips Connors' mark for men's tennis dominance


ROGER Federer AP

LONDON—ROGER FEDERER set a new record for men's tennis dominance on Monday, when he celebrated his 161st consecutive week as world number one.

The Swiss eclipsed Jimmy Connors' 30-year-old milestone after extending a streak that began on Feb. 2, 2004.

"I've been looking forward to this day to come and I'm very excited. That is definitely one of the biggest records I've broken so far in my career," Federer told reporters in Dubai.

American Connors enjoyed 160 weeks as the world's top-ranked player between July 1974 and August 1977.

The Swiss master is guaranteed to leave that benchmark far behind as his closest rival, Spain's Rafael Nadal, trails the 25-year-old by 3,415 points in the ATP entry system.

When the ATP updated the rankings at around 0500 GMT, they showed Federer atop with 8,120 points and Nadal on 4,705.

The rest lag far behind with American Andy Roddick in third place on 2,830.

"I am profoundly proud of not only being able to compete with my opponents today, but also with history," Federer told his official Web site.

"One hundred and sixty one weeks is a long time and being able to lead this statistic from now on is a terrific feeling.

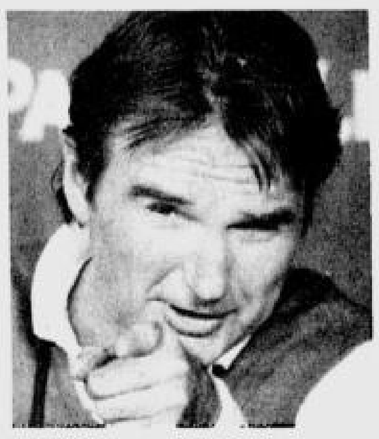
As you can imagine it has taken a lot to come this far."

Such is Federer's dominance in the sport, the Swiss made sure he would overtake Connors by winning the season-ending Masters Cup in November.

The only tournament he has played since was last month's Australian Open, where he became the first man in 27 years to win a grand slam title without dropping a set.

"I guess I'm the best tennis player in the world. If I were another player, I would be amazed a little bit to see always the same guy winning," Federer said in Melbourne.

Federer's triumph at Melbourne Park gave him a 10th grand slam title. He returns to action in Dubai this week. *Reuters*


JIMMY Connors AP

Pistons topple Bulls; Rockets subdue Magic

DETROIT—CHRIS WEBBER SCORED WITH 2.2 SECONDS LEFT TO LIFT THE DETROIT Pistons to a 95-93 win over the Chicago Bulls and spoil Ben Wallace's return to Auburn Hills on Sunday.

Webber matched a season-high with 21 points for the Pistons, who won their fourth successive game and 15th in the 18 games since he has been in the starting lineup.

"I'm not trying to replace Ben (Wallace)," Webber told reporters. "I'm just playing like a guy who is happy to be a Piston." The usual sell-out crowd at The Palace was not happy to see Wallace in a Chicago uniform and the four-times NBA Defensive Player of the Year was booed every time he touched the ball.

Wallace signed a four-year, $60-million contract with the Bulls in the off-season and seemed to enjoy being the center of attention in a building where he enjoyed his greatest success for six seasons.

"I wanted to see how loud they would boo," Wallace said.

The streaking Pistons opened up a 4 ½ game lead in the Central Division with their 11th in 12 games after the Bulls had squandered a 16-point third-quarter lead.

Richard Hamilton led all scorers with 22 points, Chauncey Billups had 15 points and nine assists and Tayshaun Prince added 14 points and nine rebounds for Detroit.

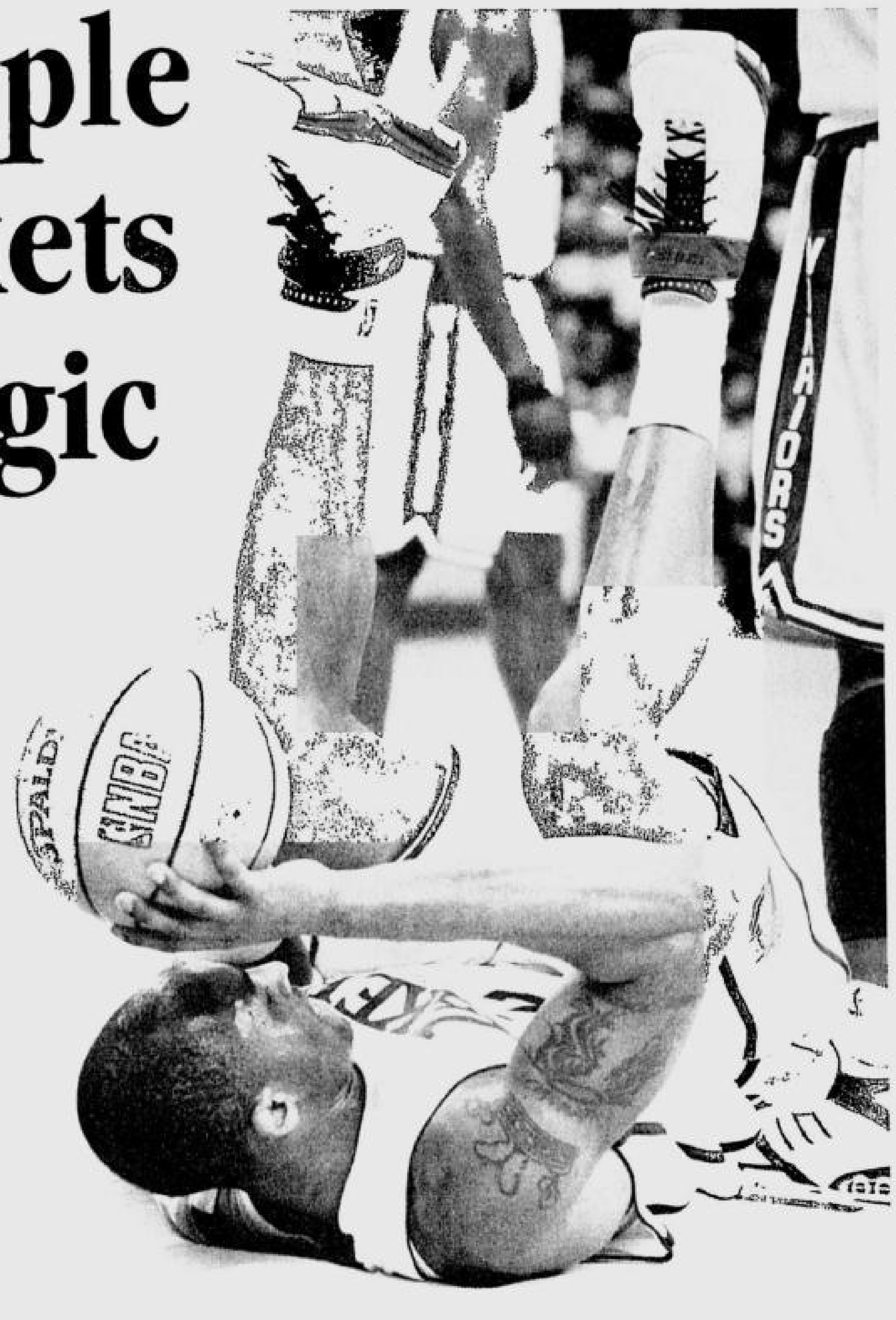
Ben Gordon scored 21 points to lead the Bulls and P.J. Brown matched a season high with 19 points. Luol Deng added 18 points for Chicago, whose three-game winning streak was snapped.

Tracy McGrady scored 34 points against his former team mates to lead the Houston Rockets to a 97-93 win over the Orlando Magic.

Shaquille O'Neal had 19 points and 11 rebounds as the Miami Heat edged the Cleveland Cavaliers, 87-81. Miami won for just the second time in nine games with Dwyane Wade out of the lineup. LeBron James had 29 points to lead Cleveland.

Kevin Garnett had 26 points and 17 rebounds as the Minnesota Timberwolves ended a three-game losing streak by downing the Washington Wizards, 98-94. *Reuters*

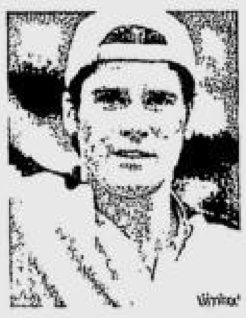
NBA on Basketball TV Today
10 a.m.—LA Lakers vs Utah (replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)


THE LAKERS' Kobe Bryant holds the ball after taking a fall against the Warriors Sunday. AP

Haas thumps Roddick, tops Memphis tilt

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—GERMAN SECOND seed Tommy Haas earned his second straight ATP Memphis title Sunday with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over top-seeded American Andy Roddick.

Haas completed his title run without facing a break point in 47 service games, and polished off Roddick in just 61 minutes.


TOMMY Haas AP

"Something about this tournament makes me play well," said Haas, who converted five of his eight break points against the American and closed out the match with his own eighth ace.

"Obviously against Andy you're never sure how it's going to go," Haas said. "He can blow you off the court or you can be in the match depending on how he serves. I think I served extremely well holding my serve and being patient from the baseline and going for the right shots at the right time.

The 28-year-old German, who also won here in 1999, joined Jimmy Connors - now Roddick's coach - as the only players to win at least three Memphis titles.

Haas won his 11th ATP title and collected a first prize of 156,550 dollars.

Roddick fell to 3-6 lifetime against Haas. *AFP*

Venus returns to orbit with South victory

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—VENUS WILLIAMS has a message for anyone who thought she might use her latest injury as an excuse to finally leave tennis. She's back, and she plans on working her way back up to an elite level.

"I love a challenge," Williams said.

VENUS Williams AP

She hadn't played competitive tennis since last October because of an injured left wrist and had pulled out of four events, including the Australian Open won last month by her sister, Serena. She returned to action at the Cellular South Cup, a Tier III event, hoping to work herself back into shape.

The 26-year-old Williams did more than that, playing well enough to win the event Saturday night, improving her footwork and cutting down on her own mistakes with each match.

"I really have nothing to prove," Williams said. "I feel like I understand what I have to do, myself, as far as my talent. I understand how hard I've worked. And I think, time and again, Serena and I have, when we've come back from injury, we've come back just as good — if not better."

In Saturday night's final, she dismissed 17th-ranked Shahar Peer of Israel, 6-1, 6-1 in 68 minutes with a display of the power she so loves in winning her 34th career title and first since Wimbledon in 2005.

Not bad for someone who hadn't played since losing in the second round in Luxembourg in October. *AP*

Stenson claims World Match Play crown

MARANA, ARIZONA—SWEDE HENRIK STENSON, who holed the winning putt for Europe at last year's Ryder Cup, celebrated the biggest victory of his career on Sunday.

The 30-year-old from Gothenburg reeled off successive birdies to complete a 2&1 triumph over defending champion Geoff Ogilvy of Australia in the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship final.

Despite struggling with his swing for much of a topsy-turvy day at Dove Mountain's Gallery Golf Club, Stenson became the first Swede, and only the second European, to win a World Golf Championships (WGC) event.

"This one is definitely the biggest one of my career," Stenson told reporters after clinching his maiden PGA Tour title and his sixth on the European Tour.

"Winning a WGC event is as close to winning a major without doing it, I guess. Obviously this gives me confidence and a push in the right direction." The big-hitting Stenson, who broke through on the European Tour by winning the 2001 Benson and Hedges International Open, has triumphed in his last two starts.

Three weeks ago, the Dubai-based Swede held off world number one Tiger Woods and Ernie Els to win the Dubai Desert Classic by a stroke with a birdie at the last.

"Winning back-to-back is something I haven't done before, and those are two great tournaments as well," he said.

"Dubai is one of the most prestigious ones on the European Tour." CAREER-HIGH FIFTH Although fatigued after playing six opponents over 120 holes this week, Stenson is delighted he will climb to a career-high fifth in the world rankings on Monday.

"It's a big week for me," he said. "I am the first Swede to win a World Golf Championships title and also I think the highest ranked Swede ever in the world rankings.

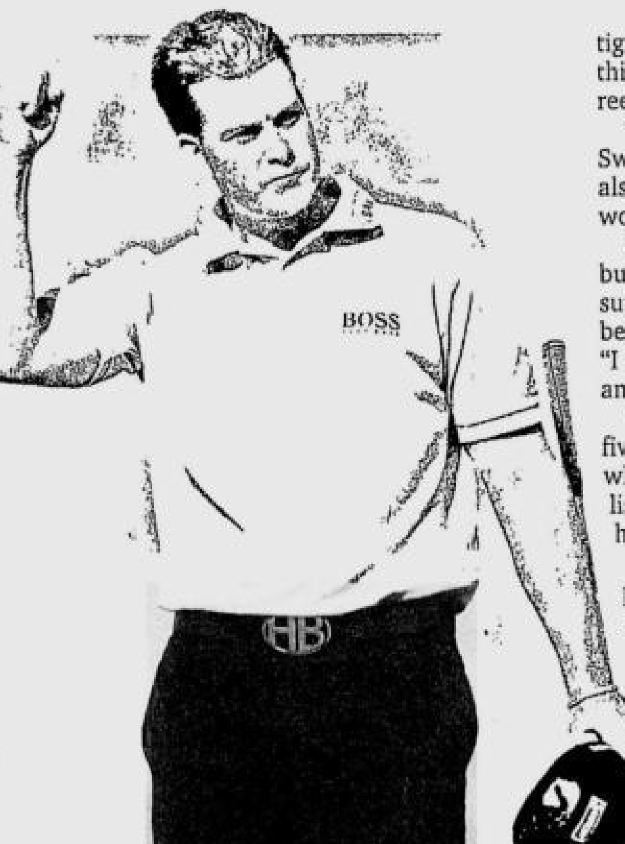
"A lot of great things have happened for me here but I'm just exhausted and it probably hasn't even sunk in 100 percent yet." Asked whether he felt he belonged among the game's elite, Stenson replied: "I think I've established myself within the top 20, and I recently moved into top 10.

"I can't go straight out and say I should be number five or number six in the world, although that's where I am at the moment. But I feel like I've established myself as a top-20 player." Stenson has set his sights on winning his first major.

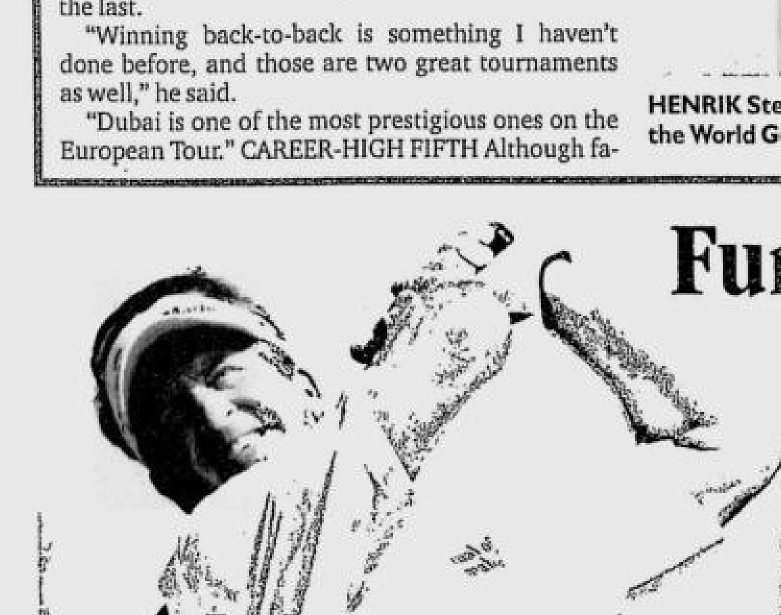
"The two childhood dreams that I had were to play in the Ryder Cup and win the British Open," said the Swede, who made his Ryder Cup debut at the K Club in Ireland last September.

"I wouldn't mind being the first Swede to win a major championship. Ideally the British Open, but if I win any of the other majors I won't return them," he added.

Britain's Darren Clarke is the only other European to win a WGC title, doing so at the 2000 Accenture Match Play Championship and the 2003 NEC-Invitational. *Reuters*


HENRIK Stenson of Sweden celebrates his 2 & 1 victory over Geoff Ogilvy of Australia in the final round of the World Golf Championships—Accenture Match Play Championship in Marana, Arizona, Feb. 25. REUTERS

Funk turns back time, triumphs in playoff


FRED Funk: Going strong at 50. AP

MEXICO CITY—FRED FUNK BECAME THE fifth oldest PGA Tour champion in history with a playoff victory over Argentina's Jose Coceres at the Mayakoba Classic on Sunday.

The 50-year-old American, who led from the first day after opening with a course-record 62, sealed a wire-to-wire win at the second extra hole on the El Camaleon course in Playa del Carmen.

Despite struggling with back pain over the last two rounds, Funk fired a one-over-par 71 to finish level with Coceres on 14-under 266 after regulation play. Coceres closed with a 69.

Australia's Peter Lonard shot a second successive 67 to secure third place at 13 under, one ahead of American Ryan Armour (66).

"It just feels good to win the tournament," Funk told reporters after clinching his eighth PGA Tour title, aged 50 years, eight months and 11 days.

Older winners in Tour history were Sam Snead (1965 Greater Greensboro Open), Art Wall, (1975 Greater Milwaukee Open), Jim Barnes (1937 Long Island Open) and John Barnum (1962 Cajun Classic).

"Just to be able to compete with the young guys on the regular tour shows that the old guy has still got something.

It's a very satisfying win for me." Although Funk had a freer hand in Mexico with the game's leading 64 players competing in the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship in Marana, Arizona, he did not feel his victory was in any way devalued.

"They can say all they want, these guys can play all the way down to the bottom of the list," he said. "The guys that come off the Nationwide are really strong players and hit the ball miles.

"So you've got to play well to come out on top. No matter who is in the field or who is not in the field, it feels really good." Funk also became only the second player in history, after fellow American Craig Stadler in 2003, to win on the PGA Tour after claiming a senior title.

The Florida-based professional claimed his maiden victory on the over-50 Champions Tour at last month's Turtle Bay Championship in Hawaii. *Reuters*

SPORTS

Adamson forges softball decider

GAME TUESDAY
(*Rosario Sports Complex, Pasig*)
10 a.m.— Adamson vs. UP (Game 3, women's softball finals)
GAME WEDNESDAY
(*Rizal Memorial Ball Park*)
9 a.m.—National U vs. and UP (For 3rd place)
11 p.m.—UST vs. Adamson (Game 1, men's baseball finals)

By Jasmine W. Payo

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY FORGED A WINner-take-all match for the UAAP softball championship after pulling off a 3-0 victory over the University of the Philippines in Game 2 of their title series on Saturday at the Rosario Sports Complex.

Zhazha Alba homered in the bottom of the third inning, while Sarah Jane Agravante made it 2-0 with another solo home run in the sixth.

Cloiene Muyco, who gave up just one hit and retired nine UP batters in seven innings, also scored in the sixth courtesy of a Yocel Aguilar triple.

The Lady Falcons will be shooting for their third straight crown at 10 a.m. today also at the Rosario Sports Complex.

Great pitching

"Muyco had great pitching unlike in our two previous losses to UP," Adamson coach Anna Santiago said in Filipino. "We had good coordination. We also limited our fielding errors."

The Lady Maroons claimed the opener of the best-of-three series with a 3-1 triumph last week.

Adamson and UP had also split their encounters in the elimination round.

The Falcons first gained the upperhand with an 11-6 victory in the first round.

But the Maroons had their revenge with a 4-3 triumph that spoiled Adamson's bid for an elimination-round sweep.

Tigers gain finals

In baseball, the University of Santo Tomas overcame UP's twice-to-beat advantage to clinch the remaining Finals berth.

The Tigers scored a 6-2 triumph over the Maroons, the No. 2 team in the eliminations, last Sunday at the Rizal Memorial Baseball Stadium.

Last Thursday, the Tigers also stunned the Maroons with a 16-5 rout in their semifinal match.

UST and Adamson will clash in Game 1 of the best-of-three Finals series tomorrow at the Rizal field.

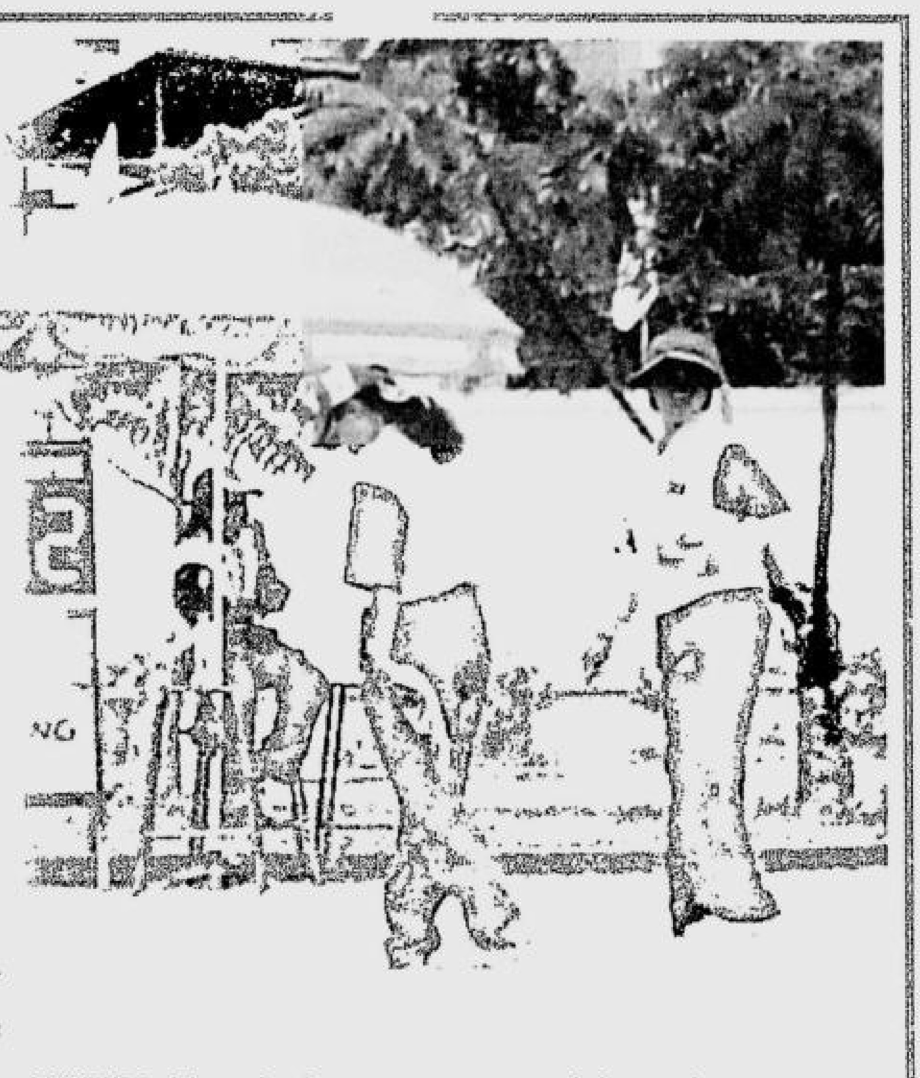
Top-seeded Adamson earlier advanced to the Finals after a 9-8 semifinal squeaker against National University.

UST and Adamson also split their elimination-round encounters.

The Tigers prevailed in 12 innings in the first round, 5-4, but the Falcons, fielding with aplomb, came up with a 10-6 victory in their second match.

Bowled over by 'boules'

A passion for the French sport of petanque stirs Nancy Bercasio to sustain RP's modest gain in the SEA Games, writes June Navarro



MEMBERS of the national petanque team get ready for practice.

VENTURING INTO THE UNKNOWN has been a fascination for Nancy Bercasio.

So, when she came across a sport alien to most Filipinos, Bercasio became obsessed in discovering how far she could take it in the country.

Her "discovery" is petanque boules, a sport that isn't as foreign as it sounds. In fact, Filipinos have started becoming good at it—good enough to win a bronze in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games after only seven months of unlocking the secrets of a sport which originated in France.

"Nobody had thought of it as a sport for Filipinos until we began to learn the fundamentals," said Bercasio, president of the Philippine Petanque Boules Association.

"And for less than a year, we easily learned how to play like our (Southeast Asian) neighbors."

Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Laos, countries which, at one time, were either under French rule or its influence, have been into petanque the past 12 years and have players who are as crazy about it as we are now about badminton.

Thailand after France

In fact, Thailand ranks second in the world after France with 17,000 enthusiasts while Vietnam, Malaysia and Laos have at least 10,000 petanque players each, according to an Asian Federation of Petanque Boules primer.

"Everybody can play the game, even the less-fortunate ones," said Bercasio. "All you need is a small area where you can practice and hit the targets."

Quite similar to lawn bowls, petanque is played on a 15-meter long and eight-meter wide pebble field where each player throws an iron-solid sphere the size of an orange to a coin-sized movable target at the end of the field.

Like lawn bowls

After three attempts, the three balls nearest the target score a point. The player who reaches 21 points after several sets wins the match. Petanque almost has the same rules with lawn bowls only that the latter is played on the green (grass).

"It seems physically undemanding but the weight of the ball and the distance of the target could put the pressure on," said Bercasio. "Do the routine several times and you'll find it really exhausting."

Last year, the RP team, boasting a pool of 18 players, copped third place behind Thailand and Vietnam in the 10th Asian championships held in Hanoi, Vietnam.

It will be the same team which will compete in Bangkok during the Asian championships in August, the final tune-up of the players before plunging into the Thailand SEAG at the end of the year.

Mildred Vicente is expected to improve on her bronze medal finish in the 2005 SEAG while her team with Gemma Casim, Vio Dela Cruz and Mildred Habhetzel are seeking to repeat their third-place act in Hanoi.

Honing local skills

Though the team has an invitation to the world championships to be held in Paris this year, Bercasio opted to beg off, stressing the need to hone the skills of the local players first before competing in the global scene.

"The competition in the world championships is different," she said. "I don't want our country to be humiliated, so it's better to train our players hard and hone their skills before sending them there," said Bercasio.

The nationals practice daily at the Angeles Sports Club in Clark Field, Pampanga. Bercasio said a petanque field would be constructed at the Nomads Sports Club in Parañaque City and another in Naga City this year.

With help from the Philippine Sports Commission and private sponsors, Bercasio is aiming to build more venues for the sport and encourage more players to approximate the number of enthusiasts that Thailand has.

Top athletes, coaches moonlighting for extra pay

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANY AMONG THE COUNTRY'S FINEST athletes and coaches may not be giving it their all for national duty.

The Philippine Sports Commission dwelt on this possibility yesterday after chair Butch Ramirez received reports that several national athletes and coaches are moonlighting as coaches of universities and schools for extra income.

While the reports are still to be verified, Ramirez said he feels sad because he expected the nationals to give their best for Team Philippines because "it's the government that pays them."

He said the PSC has already referred the issue to the Philippine Olympic Committee and the national sports associations.

Ramirez also did not say whether the PSC would punish the erring athletes and coaches but wondered "how much quality time we get from them."

The PSC chief said his monitoring agents found out that "some athletes are busy coaching, while some coaches are also busy coaching elsewhere."

"If it's true, then how much focus do they give (their preparation for future competitions)," Ramirez said. "Eventually if we are not that focused in our job, it will show."

Just the same, Ramirez said he does not blame the athletes and coaches if they take extra work on the side.

"How much are they getting from us? The maximum a coach gets is P16,000," he said. "When they can get the same amount coaching for a school or for being an enlisted personnel in the military, you just can't give that up easily for the sake of patriotism."

The PSC employs former great athletes like Elma Muros-Posadas, Onyok Velasco, Enrique Beech and Ed Pacheco as liaisons between the agency and the athletes.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Music Quest (1), Loaded (2), Richie Rich (3), Courage Heart (7)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Pert Abd Pretty (4), Blue Print (5), Summer Rain (8), Pearl's Magic (2)
Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Beat D Heat (3), Seeing Red (12), Dulce My Love (1), Kaori Yoke (8), Selectee (6), Arbiter (9)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Maigc Key/Batang Westside (10), Golden Song (3), Ilocos Pride (1), Soaring High (2), Spanish Drums/Swiss Alps (4)
Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Nico's Incharge (10), Premiere Act (7), Sovereign Dancer (9), Rho Sig (2), Beautiful Aeda (1), Batang Bukid (11)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Dream Rose (2), Roack Attack Attack (3), Tanging Ikaw (6), Rafafox (7)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Firehouse (1), Sandok (9), Mucho Macho (8), Vinia's Pride/Cast Away (7), Cainta Libre (4), Master Kenneth (7)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Lord Elgene (7), Farragut's Order (14), Friendly Venture (11), Speed Admiral (10), Ideal Gaze (1), Crystal City (12)

MOST VALUABLE: Barangay Ginebra spitfire Jayjay Helterbrand raises his trophy after being named Accel Finals MVP by the PBA Press Corps, led by its president Nelson Beltran (right), in the recent Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum. Sporteum Philippines Inc. president Willy Ortiz (left) awarded the Raymundo Trophy to Helterbrand.

BRC speed devils rev up for drag racing kickoff

THE BATTLE FOR SPEED AND PRESTIGE returns when the 2007 San Mig Coffee National Drag Racing Championship kicks off on March 3 at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip in Rosario, Batangas.

The drivers will be competing in the Quick 8, Pro class (for cars 13.99 seconds and faster), Sportsman Class (14 seconds to 15.99), Hot Street division (16 seconds and slower) in the event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

Leading the cast is defending champion Dave Jota of Blanche Racing, this year's Golden Wheel awardee for Drag Racing who will renew his rivalry with Team Ere's Jonathan Tiu, owner of the track record of 10.962 seconds.

Also vying are drivers from Team Ready, Just Racing, Good Guys, Team Batangas, Alps Racing, Pit21, Vannitec, Lowtoys, GroupN and Matonetics.

"More teams and drivers have called to join this year's series," said BRC Drag Race Director Fil Gulfin. "We expect faster cars and more heart-stopping showdowns as they dispute the titles at stake and also try to break the record time. The challenge this year is to break the 10-second barrier."

Gulfin said that safety is their foremost concern as he encouraged Quick 8 and Pro drivers to observe all safety measures and wear safety gears.

FG golf gets going at WW today

A FIELD OF 120 PLAYERS TEES OFF today in the First Gentleman Invitational Golf Tournament, a fund-raising event that will benefit 14 charitable institutions and socio-civic groups, at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

The event's proceeds will be released to the beneficiaries right after the awarding rites of the tournament organized by Ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua and the First Gentleman Foundation.

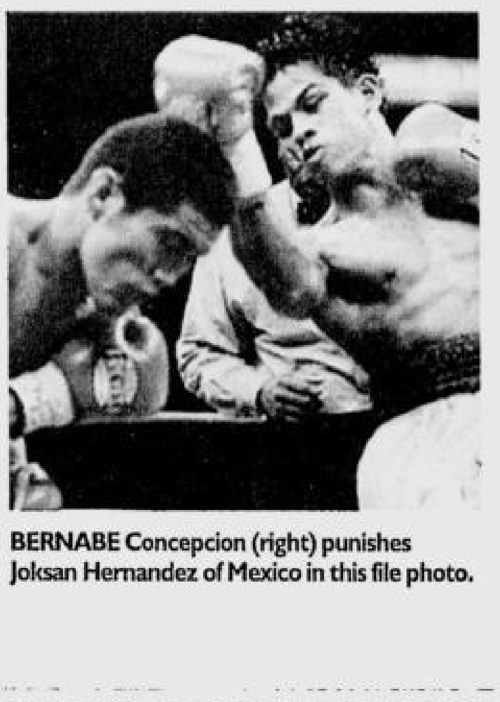
Benefiting from the event are Gawad Kalinga, Philippine General Hospital, AFP-V. Luna General Hospital, Caritas Manila, St. Jude Parish, Tuloy sa Don Bosco, Bagong Doctor Para sa Bayan, Philippine School for the Deaf, the Dominican Sisters of Molo (Asilo de Molo), Project Oyster, Philippine Bamboo Foundation, Lyric Opera Foundation Philippines, Rotary Club of Makati Central Foundation, and the Alay sa Kawal Foundation.

Veteran rules man Zacarias "Taby" Tabaniag has been named to lead the rules committee for the event, first held in 2002.

A Mercedes Benz courtesy of Cats Motors and a Toyota Camry, courtesy of UCPB Gen, are at stake as hole-in-one prizes in the event that has, among its major sponsors, San Miguel Corp., SM Group of Companies and Smart Communications.

The list of beneficiaries was expanded to 14 due to the tremendous response of the private sector to the project.

Concepcion stops Korean foe in 4th rd



BERNABE Concepcion (right) punishes Joksan Hernandez of Mexico in this file photo.

BAGUIO CITY—WORLD-RATED BERNABE Concepcion stopped Korean Jae Chunmun in the fourth round following a flurry of punches that jarred the visiting fighter at the Baguio Convention Center Sunday night.

Bernabe, 19, of Aljoe Stable in Manila, survived a standing eight count in the second round to stun Jae with strong shots to the face, forcing the referee to stop the contest at 1:59 of the fourth round.

Jae, South Korea's No. 2 super flyweight contender, had no answer to the successive blows in the fourth that allowed Bernabe to live up to his billing as the country's No. 1 and the World Boxing Council's No. 12 contender in the super flyweight division.

Bernabe's triumph capped a 60-round card dubbed "Philippines versus Korea Boxing Classic" and held as part of the ongoing Baguio Flower Festival.

In the undercard, reigning Oriental Pacific Boxing Federation flyweight champion Juanito Rubillar won by technical decision over Baguio favorite Larry Mede, the country's No. 2 light flyweight contender.

Rubillar, who was leading on points, suffered a deep cut in the forehead in a clash of heads in the sixth round.

Brothers Alvin and Aldrin Tam, sons of former OPBF lightweight champion Rey Tam, won their assignments.

Aldrin, fighting in the 122-lb division, needed only 32 seconds of the first round to dispose of June de Sagun of Trece Martires City, while Alvin (122 lb) won a four-round unanimous decision over Leo Albal.

Jason Eguerra of Dumaguete City unanimously decisioned Mike Tumbaga of Baguio in eight rounds. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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February inflation seen at a low 3-3.6%

Bangko Sentral cites lower oil prices, strong peso

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS SEES THE COUNTRY'S annual inflation rate softening further to 3-3.6 percent in February from a four-year low of 3.9 percent in January.

"The deceleration is expected due to the reduction in domestic oil prices, strengthening of the peso and diminishing base effects of reformed value-added tax," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco said yesterday.

The peso has been Asia's strongest currency so far this year, appreciating by nearly 2 percent since January to close at 48.245 as of yesterday. A strong peso tempers the rise in consumer prices by reducing the cost of importation, particularly of oil.

The BSP's benign outlook on inflation remains even as strong inflows of foreign money have jacked up the year-on-year growth in domestic liquidity to 21.4 percent in December from 18.5 percent in November.

Domestic liquidity or m3 is an estimate of the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

"There's still no immediate risk to the inflation outlook at this point," Tetangco said at the sidelines of a Fund Managers Association of the Philippines forum.

But the BSP had also acknowledged during its last official statement on inflation that "the strong growth in domestic liquidity, should it persist, could also exert a potential upside impact on inflation."

Based on the government's economic forecasts, inflation rate—which measures the rate of increase in prices of basic consumer goods and services—would return to the targeted path of 4-5 percent after overshooting official targets during the last few years.

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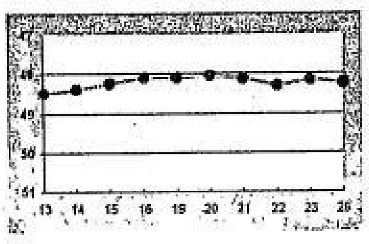
CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱48.245 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 26, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.28-percent lower yesterday as investors unloaded index heavyweights in favor of smaller capitalized stocks, dealers said.

The market traded in a narrow range, reflecting a dearth of fresh news, although mining and oil stocks advanced following a surge in metal and oil prices, they said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 9.37 points to 3,380.00 after moving between 3,378.28 and 3,395.61.

The broader all-share index fell 7.47 points to 2,165.31.

AFP

All-Filipino team to run Lafayette mine

By Daxim L. Lucas

HAVING WEATHERED INTENSE PUBLIC scrutiny and criticism since last year, the new management team of Lafayette Philippines Inc. (LPI) has vowed to turn around the firm's fortunes while adhering to stringent regulations imposed by the government.

At the same time, the new management led by businessman Carlos Dominguez said that his group would steer clear of the mistakes committed by the former expatriate managers that led to the mining controversy.

"We have basically kicked out all the Australians responsible for the incident in the past," Dominguez said in an interview. "We now have in place a professional team that is also all-Filipino."

Dominguez took the helm of LPI in the wake of the environmental problems on Rapu-Rapu island in Albay, bringing with him his management and technical team responsible for the turnaround of Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp. (Pasar).

"We have the same team now working on the Rapu-Rapu mining operations," he said.

Dominguez admitted that mistakes were made by the firm's former Australian managers who rushed the mine's operations without fully completing facilities needed to ensure its safety.

With the Australian managers gone, however, the former agriculture secretary under President Aquino assured that the firm was well on its way to becoming a productive enterprise.

"In fact, we are saving $2 million a year just by removing the expatriate staff and going direct to our suppliers," he said.

Dominguez said he hoped to get the Rapu-Rapu facility up to full production soon.

With mining operations at full capacity, he estimated that the mine would earn up to $180 million a year from its gold, silver and copper output, given the strong prices of commodities in the world market today.

The Rapu-Rapu mine has an estimated life

ALL-FILIPINO/B2

IN THIS ISSUE

AGI plans sale of more shares /B2

Gov't readies list of preferred areas /B6

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AGI plans sale of more shares

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

ALLIANCE GLOBAL Group Inc., the flagship firm of property developer Andrew Tan, plans to float more shares to finance its expansion, the company said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

AGI earlier announced the acquisition of shares in brandy maker Emperador Distillers Inc. (EDI) and property giant Megaworld Corp., both controlled by Tan, for about P20 billion.

These acquisitions will pave the way for the consolidation of interests held by Tan in various industries under AGI as the new holding company.

AGI will buy all of EDI's common shares for P3 billion in cash, making it AGI's wholly owned subsidiary.

AGI will also acquire 5.25 billion shares of Megaworld, or roughly 25 percent of the company's outstanding equity, for about P17 billion.

AGI, through its wholly owned subsidiary, Newtown Land Partners, already owns 21 percent of Megaworld. The new acquisition will increase AGI's consolidated equity investment in Megaworld to 46 percent.

"AGI will bring together all our investments in real estate, food and beverage and the quick-service restaurant industry. The company will serve as a primary vehicle to expand these businesses and look into various opportunities for growth," Tan earlier said.

The board of directors of AGI recently approved the proposed acquisition into the two companies but the deal has yet to be finalized.

As a new conglomerate, AGI will embark on aggressive property development through Megaworld, a leader in the property market's two fastest-growing segments: mid-income housing and business process outsourcing office. Megaworld expects to generate a net income of P2.88 billion in 2007.

AGI's food and beverage business, on the other hand, will be expanded through EDI. EDI manufactures Emperador Brandy, the largest selling brandy in the world.

All-Filipino team…

From page B0

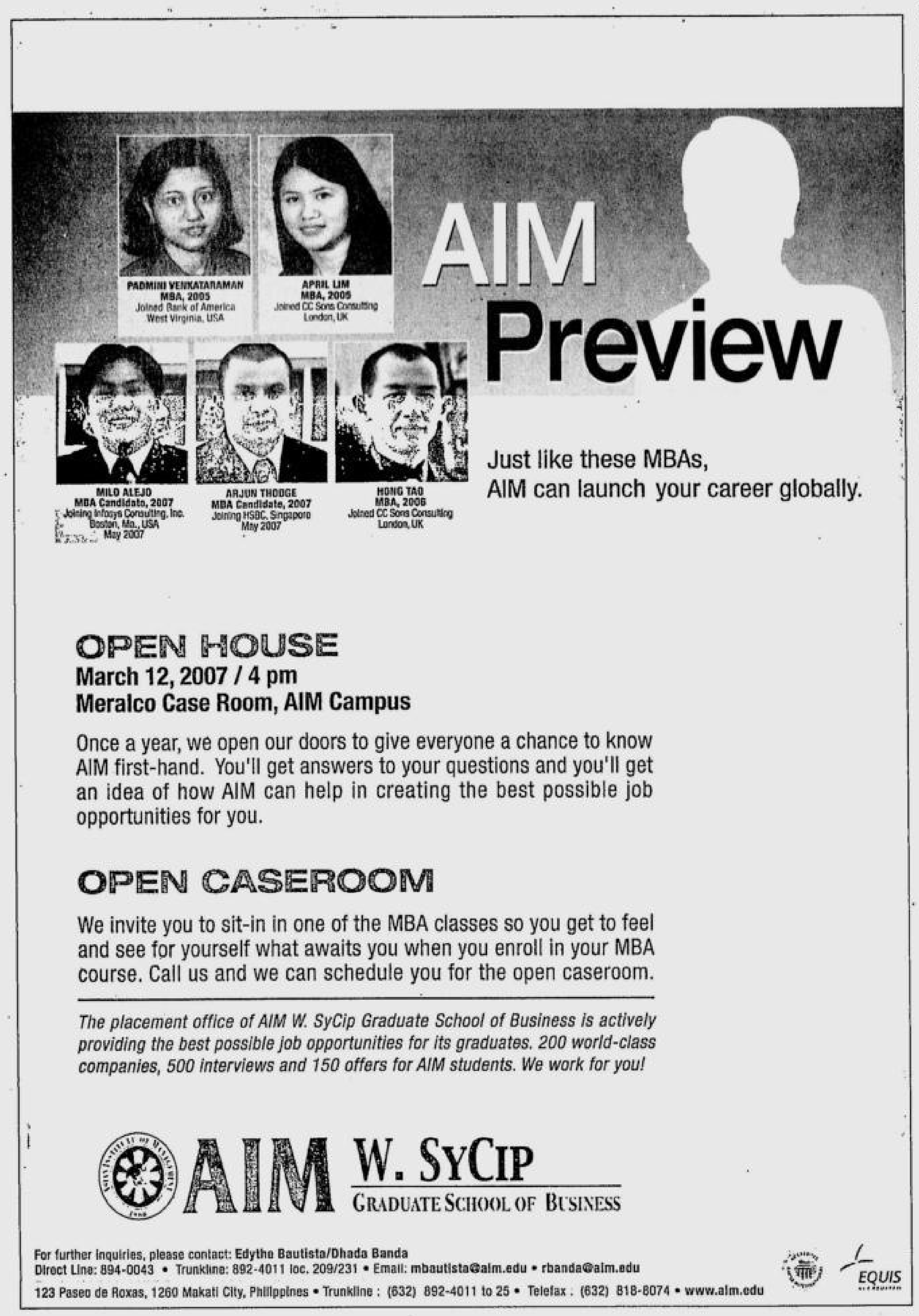
of six years, assuming that no other exploration is done in the area.

The company has earned $38 million over a 120-day period when it conducted its test run to satisfy the safety requirements imposed by regulators.

Dominguez said that LPI would contribute significantly to the local and national economies.

"This is the biggest firm in Bicol," he said. "We will be paying $2 million a year in excise taxes alone."

On top of this, the firm also intends to generate local employment by sourcing more of its supplies from the local communities.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Joined Bank of America
West Virginia, USA

APRIL LIM
MBA, 2005
Joined CC Sons Consulting
London, UK

MILO ALEJO
MBA Candidate, 2007
Joining Infosys Consulting, Inc.
Boston, Ma., USA
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ARJUN THODGE
MBA Candidate, 2007
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 26, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	13	13	12.5	12.75	113,300
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	62.5	62.5	62	62.5	2,396,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69.5	68	68.5	1,475,600
China Banking Corp.	925	930	925	930	2,100
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.59	0.62	0.59	0.62	15,800,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	111	113	111	112	144,480
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	66.5	67	66	66.5	2,211,900
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	55	55	55	55	12,500
Philippine National Bank	54	54	54	54	86,700
Phil. Savings Bank	66	66	65	65	14,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42	42.5	42	42	130,100
Security Bank Corp.	86.5	86.5	83.5	84	13,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	66.5	66.5	66.5	66.5	81,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	1,000
Bankard Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.7	2,120,000
Citiseconline Com Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.1	7.5	1,649,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1635	1620	1635	2,390
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.12	2.2	2.12	2.2	698,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	825	825	820	825	96,630
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2110	2110	2110	2110	180
Ivantage Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.74	1.74	1,443,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.6	6.8	6.5	6.6	44,708,000
First Gen Corp.	58	58	57	57	333,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	78.5	78.5	78	78	1,025,900
Manila Electric Co. A	79.5	79.5	77.5	78	227,300
Manila Electric Co. B	80	80	78.5	78.5	489,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	10	10	9.8	9.9	6,891,000
Petron Corp.	4.9	4.95	4.75	4.9	21,661,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.3	12,010,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.52	1.62	1.5	1.5	3,073,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	32,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	13,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	25.5	25.5	4,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	54.5	55	54	55	611,500
RFM Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	270,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	74,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	570,000
San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	66.5	65.5	66	78,600
San Miguel Corp. B	77.5	78	77.5	77.5	132,300
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	3.9	3.9	29,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.28	2.08	2.26	7,607,000
Universal Robina Corp.	20	20	19	19.25	1,289,900
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.92	1.94	1.9	1.9	11,861,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.85	5	4.8	5	2,690,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.6	3,061,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	35,000
Republic Cement Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	1,350,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	2,344,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.85	0.9	0.85	0.9	30,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	90,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	40,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	200,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.39	0.42	45,580,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	449,200,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	50,000,000
Ayala Corp.	625	630	620	630	141,510
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.82	760,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.8	9,116,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	25,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.35	148,000
APC Group Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	7,290,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.015	0.013	0.014	109,700,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.26	1.34	1.26	1.3	9,607,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.64	50,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.78	1.9	1.78	1.88	34,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.95	4.2	3.95	4.05	1,187,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.6	5.7	4.5	5.6	4,582,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	106,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.15	15,833,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.6	7.3	7.4	775,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.7	6	5.7	6	2,958,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	1,400,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.35	3.4	3.35	3.4	752,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	14	14	13.5	13.75	885,000
Jollville Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	10,000
Keppel Holdings	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	1,000
Medco Holdings	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41	2,260,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.85	0.78	0.85	670,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	10	10.75	9.9	10.5	2,540,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.16	2.26	2.12	2.18	2,286,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	9,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.33	0.38	0.33	0.36	46,200,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	50,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	8,000
Solid Group Inc	0.81	0.83	0.81	0.83	2,360,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.22	46,630,000
SM Investments Corp.	385	385	375	377.5	2,082,320
South China Resources Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.22	1.24	760,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.94	2	1.9	1.92	525,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	2,410,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17	17.25	17	17	6,134,800
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.51	0.52	0.51	0.52	540,000
Belle Corp.	1.66	1.72	1.64	1.64	27,117,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.46	2,485,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	6,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.5	10,140,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	1,925,000
C & P Homes Inc.	3.05	3.05	2.85	3	1,938,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.35	0.35	10,500,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.29	1,560,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.92	0.99	0.92	0.97	107,870,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.88	1.82	1.88	333,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.075	0.08	0.0725	0.08	31,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.9	1.92	1.86	1.86	72,892,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	650,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.27	0.32	0.27	0.3	840,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	29,000
Interport Res.	0.012	0.016	0.012	0.014	807,800,000
Interport Res. B	0.013	0.016	0.013	0.016	370,100,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	11,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.57	3,910,000
City & Land Developers	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	74,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.02	1.04	10,215,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.3	3.45	3.25	3.35	108,527,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5	5	4.8	4.95	450,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.42	0.53	0.41	0.53	19,270,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.24	2,180,000
Polar Property Holdings	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	199,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	22	22	20.5	20.75	4,620,700
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.7	15,410,000
SM Development Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.3	4.4	1,945,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.75	13	12.75	12.75	8,807,400
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.81	0.93	0.81	0.91	15,090,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.17	0.145	0.16	60,120,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	25.5	25	25	34,100
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	6,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	2.04	1.96	1.96	33,452,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1380	1380	1360	1370	17,640
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.7	7.9	7.6	7.7	5,507,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel.Co	2610	2625	2605	2605	449,750
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.29	0.31	38,430,000
Diversified Fin. Network	2.3	3	2.3	3	3,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	17,900,000
Ionics Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.6	323,000
IPVG Corp.	6.5	6.8	6.4	6.8	5,754,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.06	12,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.0625	38,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	327,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.9	2.9	2.46	2.5	7,058,000
Philweb Corp.	0.0575	0.0575	0.05	0.055	402,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.75	312,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	111,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	29	29	28.5	28.5	928,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	50,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5.1	8	5.1	8	110,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.2	3.3	3,964,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.41	1,990,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.14	10,010,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	320,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	3,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.75	2.85	2.7	2.8	2,472,000
Paxys Inc.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	101,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.6	1,058,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.6	6.8	6.5	6.7	754,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.014	1,069,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.7	9.3	9.6	3,155,000
Benguet Corp. A	13.5	14	13.25	13.5	353,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	17,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.76	1.84	1.64	1.84	251,285,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.33	153,070,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.41	111,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.033	0.034	0.032	0.033	1,619,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.038	0.039	0.036	0.036	689,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.016	0.02	0.016	0.02	12,935,600,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.75	4.85	4.6	4.65	19,615,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19	19.25	18.75	19	192,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.76	0.8	0.74	0.79	4,970,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.32	1.36	1.28	1.32	23,884,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.33	0.37	32,950,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	66,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	2,300,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.013	1,255,800,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.25	10.25	140,000

CURRENCIES

February 26, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.759359	1.000000	48.2120
Japan	Yen	0.006277	0.008266	0.3985
United Kingdom	Pound	1.490926	1.963400	94.6594
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097248	0.128066	6.1743
Switzerland	Franc	0.615913	0.811096	39.1046
Canada	Dollar	0.655185	0.862813	41.5979
Singapore	Dollar	0.496119	0.653339	31.4988
Australia	Dollar	0.601282	0.791828	38.1756
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.014322	2.652661	127.8901
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202485	0.266652	12.8558
Brunei	Dollar	0.494503	0.651211	31.3962
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022804	0.030030	1.4478
UAE	Dirham	0.206746	0.272264	13.1264
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.316900	63.4904
Korea	Won	0.000809	0.001066	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.098076	0.129156	6.2269
Argentina	Peso	0.244757	0.322321	15.5397
Brazil	Real	0.363678	0.478927	23.0900
Denmark	Kroner	0.134148	0.176660	8.5171
India	Rupee	0.017227	0.022686	1.0937
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217457	0.286369	13.8064
Mexico	New Peso	0.068711	0.090485	4.3625
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536498	0.706514	34.0625
South Africa	Rand	0.107289	0.141289	6.8118
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023025	0.030321	1.4618

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time- Feb. 23, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian Time Closing Rate as of Feb. 16, 2007

Easing of investment rules on insurance companies sought

By Michelle V. Remo

INSURANCE FIRMS HAVE REITERATED their call for the relaxation of rules governing their investment activities, saying flexibility was needed amid the declining yields from fixed-income instruments.

Antonio De Rosas, chief finance officer of Nippon Life Insurance Philippines, said his company and other insurance firms could partly compensate their declining income from government securities if they were allowed to invest more in higher-yielding instruments.

De Rosas, who also represents Nippon at the Philippine Life Insurance Association (PLIA), said insurance firms were pushing for the amendment of the Insurance Code provision on the allowable investment activities of insurance firms.

Currently, insurance firms are allowed to invest a maximum of only 10 percent of their funds available for investments in debt securities of a company. They are, however, allowed to invest any amount in virtually risk-free government securities.

In the case of Nippon, it has recently invested P150 million in corporate bonds issued by Globe Telecom.

The company could have invested more in Globe which, he said. could have been a wise move, had the Insurance Code been more flexible.

De Rosas said the only other way to compensate for the insurance firms' declining income from fixed-income instruments was to increase the premium rates they were charging on clients.

The increase in premiums may also come with lower yields of the insurance products, he said. He noted that it was the first time in 10 years that insurance firms would increase premium rates amid the phenomenal decline in interest rates.

Most insurance firms place a big portion of their investment funds in government securities, particularly treasury bonds. The declining interest rates on government securities, however, have been adversely affecting the income-generation capability of insurance firms.

TVI to start operating $23-M flotation plant

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PHILIPpines) Inc. is expediting the commissioning of its $23-million sulfide project in the company's Canatuan mine in Zamboanga del Norte following record-level production of gold and silver in 2006.

Company officials said they were hoping to commission the flotation plant for copper and zinc by the third quarter of this year.

The management's decision to build the plant was announced only last January or about six months after a contractor found that the sulfide deposits in Canatuan were of commercial quantity.

Officials said the company wanted to start operating the Canatuan sulfide project as soon as possible to take advantage of favorable global market prices.

Also, TVIRD is pushing through this year the 'scoping' activities in its Balabag gold and silver prospect in Zamboanga del Sur.

Last week, TVIRD's Canada-based parent company TVI Pacific Inc. said it was gearing up for the "next level of expansion and growth" in its Philippine operations in the wake of a 112-percent increase in output last year.

The company said in a statement that TVIRD produced 56,880 ounces of precious metals in gold equivalent as of end-2006, up from 26,830 ounces in 2005.

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The mining boom gathers pace

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL THIS fuss about the custody of Anna Nichole Smith's body. I can assure you it will not happen to me. My wife doesn't want mine even though I'm alive.

On Friday, I had a vaccination for pneumonia, flu, herpes, HIV, asthma, hepatitis, cholera and malaria. The vaccination does not prevent these diseases, it gives them to you. You can only get rabies from being bitten by a Jewish dog. While I was waiting, I heard the doctor say, "Nurse, did you take the patient's temperature?" "No", she replied, " is it missing?"

"Doctor, I think I need glasses." "You certainly do. This is the stock market."

Did you hear about the three men who hijacked a truck of Viagra?" The police are looking for a gang of hardened criminals.

***

In the United States, the Dow has been drifting because the slowing of the economy is not being reflected in the inflation figures. While nobody is expecting a rate hike, oil is back to more than $60 a barrel and tension over Iran is building up. Metal prices are rising sharply again with gold at $670. With China's economy growing at 10 percent and India aiming to accelerate to 9 percent this year (these two countries have a combined population of 2.5 billion people, 40 percent of the world's population), demand for minerals of all kinds will continue rising for many years and I foresee metal prices to remain high.

This is good for the mining industry worldwide, and the big players overseas have been announcing extraordinary results. Furthermore, they are all rushing to the Philippines, which is rich in nickel, copper, gold and numerous other minerals.

Anglo-American has tied up with Philex and Manila Mining and has been seeking eight mining permits. BHP, which is also well established here and is the world's largest mining and energy company, has applied for seven permits. The company is investing $1.5 billion to develop a nickel project in the Philippines, which would start in 2012 and produce 50 tons of nickel a year. Sumitomo Metal is also talking to three Philippine companies to buy nickel.

Oxiana's 2nd half profits surged more than 5 times to a record $230 million.

GEO is in advanced talks with a major international investment house to tap offshore funds for its mining exploration. GEO has acquired the nickel mining rights of Garnierite Mining in Bukidnon. It has already acquired the nickel mining rights in Palawan, together with Saprolite's s nickel-chromite and nickel-cobalt deposits and properties in Zambales. Out of the 42 tenements originally shown on its web site, 20 are listed as being in advanced stages of negotiations with claimowners.

CVMR is also here to invest $3 billion in a nickel processing and refining plant in the Philippines. It already has saprolitic and laterite ore deposits with various companies. I had not heard of it because it is privately owned but it employs 7,000 workers in eight countries so it is a huge concern. It is here to look for nickel in Eastern Samar. GEO has just agreed to sell nickel ore to CVMR, which it will extract from some of its nickel projects in Bukidnon. The news was released from China to Bloomberg.

While I may have alerted investors to the attraction of GEO as mutual funds of mines, as opposed to a single mine, I am not responsible for the huge rise that has taken place these past few weeks. It is due to the fact that the foreign investors are pouring into the Philippines and buying the shares of GEO.

The reason is obvious. They like the business model, which has been very successful in other countries and at present, only GEO is pursuing it. I believe I have discovered the Paxxys of the mining industry and GEO will continue to grow as every deal adds value to the shares. I have not sold any of mine.

Another interesting stock is MHI, which has just changed its name to Nihau. I imagine it has been reserved for Chinese investors but I have bought some anyhau.

The huge rise in volume in OM on Friday to 2.6 billion shares, accompanied by a breakout to .016, suggests that something is in the wind. To technical analysts, volume is extremely important and today, there are huge block sales of 17.4 billion shares, equal to 25 percent of the company's capital, plus a further jump in the price to .20. Something must be going on.

VUL has been a dismal performer, dropping from 1.80 to a 1.16. At that point, the risk factor became zero and it recovered to 1.30 on higher volume. I think this is a low risk investment.

In fact, I think that no matter which mining stocks you buy now, you will be making money at the end of the year and this includes MA and LC. I hear that APX has now been sorted out by a director from Crew but we must await confirmation on Feb. 28. If all is well, as I believe, then APX should recover especially with the price of gold at its current level. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

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Php 1.1 Billion Term Facility
Php 3.5 Billion Syndicated Term Loan
US$ 700.0 Million Senior Secured Amortizing Term Loan
Php 2.8 Billion 5-Year Floating Rate Corporate Notes
Php 5.0 Billion Long-Term Negotiable Certificates of Deposits
Php 3.7 Billion Term Loan Facility
Php 5.5 Billion 7-Year Fixed Rate Corporate Notes
Php 1.5 Billion Initial Public Offering
Php 1.5 Billion Preferred Shares
Php 12.0 Billion 7-Year Fixed and Floating Rate Corporate Notes
Php 16.7 Billion Initial Public Offering
Php 7.7 Billion 5-Year Retail Treasury Bonds
Php 3.1 Billion 10-Year Syndicated Term Loan
Php 1.778 Billion 12-Year Syndicated Term Loan

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THE SPECIAL BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF NCT-1 AND NCT-2

INVITATION FOR COMPARATIVE PROPOSALS

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) invites interested Port Operators (challengers) to participate in the challenge process for its Project *Operation and Management of New Container Terminal-1 (NCT-1).*

Request for Comparative Proposal (RFCP)/ bid documents are available at the SBMA-Project Management Office, Engineering Department, Bldg. 29, Subic Bay Freeport Zone starting at 8:00 a.m. of **March 14, 2007 up to 5:00 p.m. of June 18, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php100,000.00 or US$2,000.00 to the SBMA Treasury Department at Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. For inquiries, please contact the Office of the SBAC at tel. nos. (6347) 252-4381 to 83, 252-4895, facsimile (6347) 252-3014 and website: http://koreyo.sbma.com.

A Pre-Proposal Conference (Pre-bid) shall be held on **May 9, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the SBMA Corporate Board Room, Bldg. 229, Waterfront Road, SBFZ. The deadline for submission of complete bid proposals shall be on or before 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2007 at the SBAC Chairman's Office, Office of the Administrator and CEO, Room 205, Bldg. 229 Waterfront Road, SBFZ.

ARMAND C. ARREZA
Administrator and CEO/Chairman, SBAC for the Commercialization of NCT-1 and NCT-2

(PDI – Feb. 27; March 6 & 13, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
DR. JOSE FABELLA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Manila

INVITATION TO RE-BID

The Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital invites interested bidders for the re-bid of:

		ABC
MEDICAL LIQUID OXYGEN Including Vacuum Insulated Evaporator	P	3,878,000.00
MEDICAL CASES		5,401,300.00

Bid documents may be secured at the BAC Secretariat, Administrative Office. For details, please contact telephone no. 735-7144.

Schedule of Activities:

Pre-bid Conference	March 5, 2007 @ 2:00 p.m.	Reception Room
Bid Opening	March 16, 2007 @ 9:00 a.m.	Reception Room

The DJFMH reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality found therein and to accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government.

The DJFMH-BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **ELISEA S. MARQUEZ, M.D., D.P.B.A.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 27, 2007)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	: **Proposed Supply / Installation and Repair of Aluminum Panel Windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings**
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed supply / installation and repair of aluminum panel windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings all in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	: BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini St. cor. P. Ocampo, Manila
Approved Budget	: Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P 21,612,131.00)
Source of Funding	: BSP Corporate Funds
Contract Duration	: One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	: Registration Particulars of at least "Medium A" (Building and Industrial Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving construction with glass and glazing works involving at least three (3) storey building or similar projects. The prospective bidder's largest single completed similar contract must be at least ten million eight hundred ten thousand pesos (P 10,810,000.00)
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	: Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects. For those contractors who have previously done / completed BSP projects, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity Or	: At least Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P 21,612,131.00) *computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started).*
Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	: At least Two Million One Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Pesos (P 2,162,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI) / Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	: Five Hundred Pesos per set (P 500.00/set)
Date of Issuance	: February 26 to March 06, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission	: March 09, 2007 / 11:00 AM
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	: March 22, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid / Tender Documents Issuance	: Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (P 10,800.00)
Date of Issuance	: March 23 to 26, 2007 / 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Pre-Bid Conference	
Date and Time	: March 30, 2007 / 9:30 AM
Venue	: MR2A Conference Room, 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	April 17, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St., Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility / ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract, including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – February 27 & March 6, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu
MUNICIPALITY OF CARMEN
OFFICE OF THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Telefax # (032) 4299217; 4299215

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Carmen, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of the various heavy equipment for the Municipality of Carmen, as follows:

Item Description	Quantity	Adv. No.	ABC	Period of Delivery	Purpose	Bidders Fee
1. 6 TONNER Engine 6BG1, With complete Accessories including Spare Tires, Jack & Tire Wrench, Upgraded Good running Condition.	Two (2) Units	RE-Adv. No. 07-01		15 CD	For the Infrastructure Projects of the Municipality	
2. CRAWLER EXCAVATOR, Model UHO7-5, Engine – EL 100, Upgraded, Good running condition.	One (1) Unit	Re-Adv. No. 07-02		15 CD	For the Infrastructure Projects of the Municipality	
3. GRADER Model GD31, Engine 4D120 Upgraded, Good running condition	One (1) Unit	Re-Adv. No. 07-03		15 CD	For the Infrastructure Projects of the Municipality	
4. BULLDOZER Model D85A – 12, Engine – Cummins NH220, Upgraded, Good running condition.	One (1) Unit	Re-Adv. No. 07-04		15 CD	For the Infrastructure Projects of the Municipality	
ABC			7,000,000.00			7,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years, with an amount of at least 50% of the project for bidding. The BAC shall non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statements and Screening, Bid Security, Performance, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The Schedule of Activities is listed, as follows:

Submission & deadline of Letters of Intent & Issuance Eligibility Forms	– Feb. 27-March 1, 2007	8:00am-5:00pm	BAC Office c/o BAC Secretariat
Deadline for the Submission of Eligibility Documents	– March 5, 2007	8:00am-5:00pm	BAC Office c/o BAC Secretariat
Issuance of Notice To Eligible Bidders and Pre-Bid Conference	– March 6, 2007	2:00pm	SB Session Hall
Issuance of Bid Documents	– March 12, 2007	8:00am-5:00pm	BAC Office
Submission / Receipt of Bids	– March 15, 2007	8:00am-5:00pm	BAC Office
Opening of Bids	– March 19, 2007	2:00pm	SB Session Hall
Bid Evaluation/Post-qualification	– March 26, 2007	2:00pm	SB Session Hall
Notice of Award	– March 28, 2007		

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable bidder's fee as stated-above, to the Office of the Municipal Treasurer.

The pre-bid conference and opening of bids shall be conducted at the S.B. Session Hall, Municipality of Carmen, Cebu.

The Municipality of Carmen assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid and, reserves the right to reject any and all bids, to waive any defect or informality of the bid proposals received and to accept the offer it deems advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **FLORENTINA C. MAGALONG**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 27, 2007)

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Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5279

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

5 KVA of Uninterruptible Power Supply under FGT 51993
Approved Budget: PHP 2,936,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Eloisa J. Hufana** starting **February 27, 2007**, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on March 21, 2007, **2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management's Office Wall Clock Time)** of April 4, 2007. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI–Feb. 27, 2007)

More Classified Ads:

Supreme Court of the Philippines – Judicial and Bar Council Page A4
Department of Labor and Employment – National Capital Region Page A19

OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

MISS RAMONA F. DIAZ

Peacefully joined her Creator
on February 24, 2007 at the age of 86.

Her sister **FELICIDAD**; brothers: **AMADO, UBALDO (†), LUCIO, Jr.,** the late **Mayor JOSE (†), & ROGELIO**; sisters-in-law **LOURDES, EDRICION, ADELINA, LETICIA & TERESITA**; nephews & nieces; grandchildren & great-grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at her residence at 131 B. Mariano Street, Sta. Ana, San Mateo, Rizal.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 28, 2007 after the 1:30 PM Mass (Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu) at the San Mateo Catholic Cemetery.

ANTONIO G. UNGSON, SR.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on February 25, 2007 at the age of 92.

His loving children **Olivia, Lilian, Antonio Jr., Yvonne, Susan**; children-in-law, grandchildren and relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Garden Suite of Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City. Interment will be on Thursday, March 1, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Loyola Guadalupe, Garden Suite.

In Loving Memory
of Our Dearly Beloved

DR. JOVENCIO L. VALEÑA

on his 13th Death Anniversary

Holy Masses were held at the following churches:

St. Peter's Parish	Calauag, Quezon
St. Claire Monastery	Lopez, Quezon
Most Holy Rosary Parish	Lopez, Quezon
San Isidro Parish	Lopez, Quezon
San Diego De Alcala Parish	Gumaca, Quezon
Carmel of Our Lady	Gumaca, Quezon
Shrine of St. Vincent Ferrer	Gumaca, Quezon
Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral Parish	Cubao, Q.C.
Sacred Heart Parish	Kamuning, Q.C.
St. Paul The Apostle Parish	Timog Ave., Q.C.

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
MANUEL G. SAMSON	Sta. Rita Chapel Philam, Q.C.	to be announced later	Himlayang Pilipino
RESTITUTO C. INTAL	National Shrine of Sacred Heart, Makati	28 Feb. 2007 / 4:00 PM	Loyola Mem. Park Crematory, Guadalupe, Makati City
ILDEFONSO SERRANO, JR.	Chapel-7 Quezon City	2 March 2007/9:30 AM	Eternal Gardens Memorial Park
ELIEZER A. AZOGUE	Chapel-12 Quezon City	3 March 2007/9:00 AM	Paraiso Memorial Park

---

Our beloved Father

FELIPE "DINDO" YSCIAR GUTIERREZ

September 13, 1928 - February 24, 2007

Peacefully joined his Creator
on the 24th day of February 2007 at the age of 78.

His remains lie in state at the Acacia Rose Chapel, Sanctuarium, 739 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, and will be cremated today, February 27, 2007 at the Sanctuarium Crematory after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

DEATH NOTICES

ERIBERTO ESGUERRA FLORES
Peacefully joined our Lord
on February 23, 2007 at the age of 85.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 4, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina and will be cremated on March 1, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

FELIX BONUS BASILIO
Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord
on February 26, 2007 at the age 75.

His remains lie in state at their residence in Rosepark Subd., Concepcion, Tarlac.

Interment will be on March 3, 2007 at 8:30 a.m.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

Bond index up

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE FUND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION of the Philippines yesterday launched the Asian Local Bond Index, which will track the yields of various government bonds.

The index was launched in collaboration with British banking giant HSBC to help foreign and local investors decide where to put their money.

The index tracks the performance of domestic bonds issued by Hong Kong, India, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

"An independent and well-published total return fixed-income index can provide investors with objective measures in which to compare a fund manager's performance relative to the market," Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a speech yesterday during the launch of the ALBI.

The ALBI is calculated daily in different currencies, based on the weighted returns of each index.

HSBC sets the country weightings for the ALBI to help provide a picture of currency bonds available to international investors.

Six Philippine sub-indices are available on the ALBI—the overall local currency bond index; money market index for securities with maturity of less than one year but more than three months; index for securities with a maturity of one to three years; index for bonds with a term of up to five years; index for bonds with a maturity of over five years, and another index for newly issued bonds.

"We hope that the industry shall continue to maintain the index in accordance with market conventions," Tetangco said.

Soap or 'pera'

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT SEEMS BCDA president and CEO Narciso Abaya is cracking down on those involved in the P21-billion toll road project called SCTEx (Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expessway).

Reports indicate that the project is behind schedule. Such a "delay" is already grounds for revocation of the contract.

The contractors are two Japanese consortia, namely Kajima-Obayashi-JFE Engineering-Mitsubishi and Hazama-Taisei-Nippon Steel.

To begin with, actual civil works started late. Well, by two months!

Abaya's main beef is that under the contracts, the Japanese consortia should use new heavy equipment from Japan.

But they are using second-hand equipment, mainly "hired" from local subcontractors, whose people probably don't even know what they are doing.

If you know this ex-general, you can expect Abaya to kick the Japanese out of the project soon.

***

No wonder Gloriaetta is mad!

Word has it that, due to another awful deal of Napocor, featuring the Agus 3 hydro power plant, Gloriaetta just pampered Napocor president Cyril del Callar with a little "soaping"—i.e. "sinabon!"

What may come soon, they now say, are his walking papers!

The project involves the Lanao Hydropower Development Corp., or LHDC.

In documents submitted to Napocor, the company listed its address as a rundown building on West Avenue in Quezon City.

It was incorporated about three years ago with a paid-up capital of P1.2 million.

Now, for that 220-megawatt Agus 3, the cost can easily reach P20-P25 billion.

And Napocor makes a "deal" with a company whose paid-up capital cannot even buy a Toyota Revo!

Hmm. Are the Napocor executives simply stupid?

A check with the SEC showed that among the incorporators of LHDC is Asisclo Gonzaga, the former vice president and COO of Napocor, also a former president of Transco.

He is the same guy who signed the infamous IMPSA contract that troubled three administrations, including this cute one.

***

In its press releases, the US-based drug company Pfizer said that what it did in Congress, was not… well, "lobbying."

That was apparently Pfizer's reaction to reports about the, er, recent "incident" created by the drug lobby at the House of Representatives.

Rep. Teodoro "Teddyboy" Locsin blew his top during the House special session. He got a note asking him to question the quorum. This should derail the legislation to cut the prices of medicine in this country.

According to Locsin, the note mentioned the name of Leo Wassmer, the CEO of the drug industry group called PHAP.

And that, according to Pfizer, was NOT a lobby. What was it again? Pfizer said it was an "advocacy." You know—was worried about "public health."

In other words, cheap medicine is not safe!

Pfizer forgot to say that, not so long ago, its biggest argument against the importation of cheap medicine was that it was a violation of "intellectual property rights" of the drug companies.

Meaning, cheap medicine (through importation) was not good for THEM.

Today, it is the other way around: Cheap imported medicine is not good for public health. You know—it is bad, sure, but not bad for THEM, but bad for US!

I see it now: Drug companies like Pfizer are now so concerned about "public health" that they still sell us medicine that is 10 to 20 times more expensive than the same stuff they sell in other countries.

And so, if we do not import cheap medicine, we die because we cannot afford the ones sold here by the multinational companies.

But according to them, we also die if we import cheap medicine.

I should have been a drug man instead.

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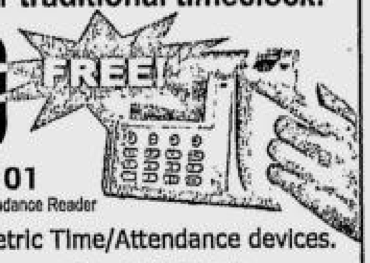

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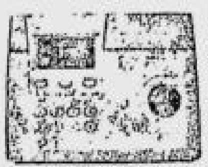

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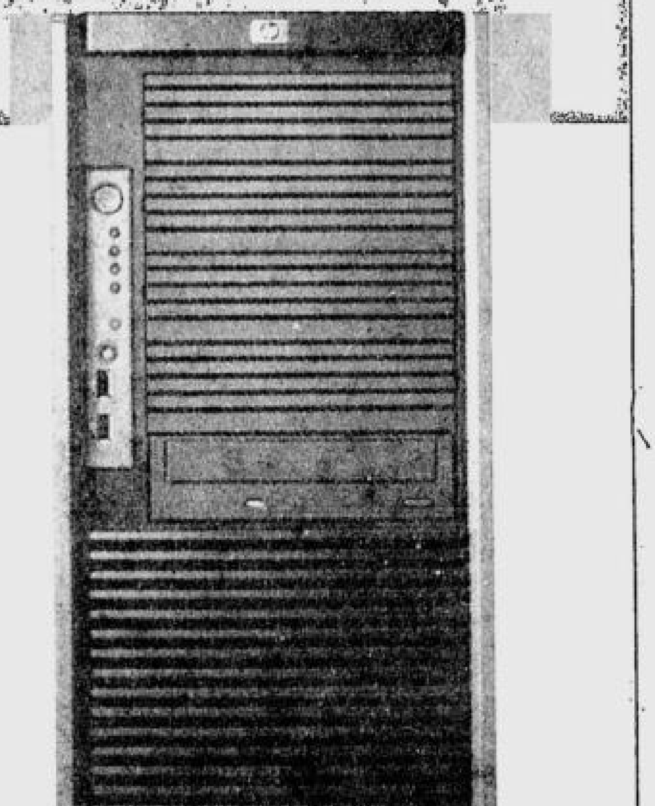

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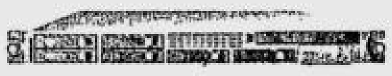

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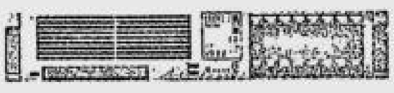

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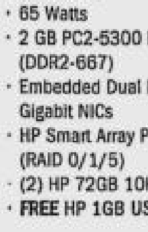

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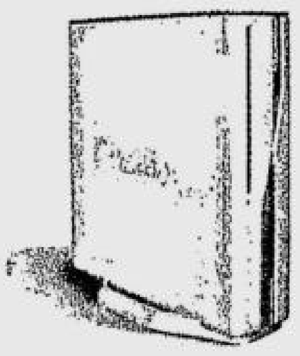
Acer recommends Windows Vista™ Home Premium.



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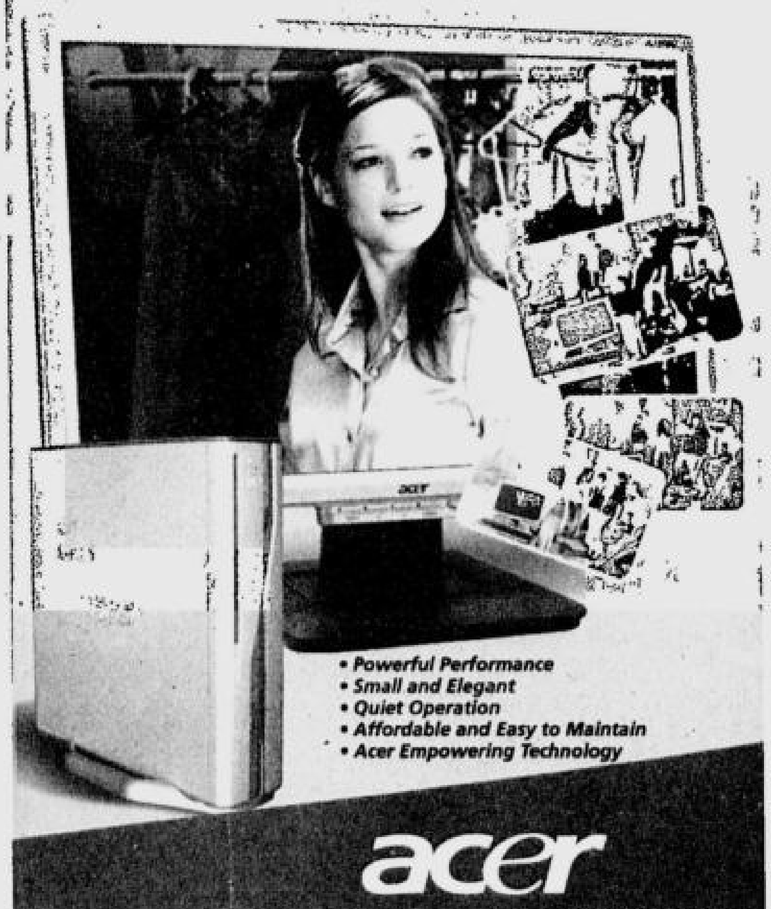

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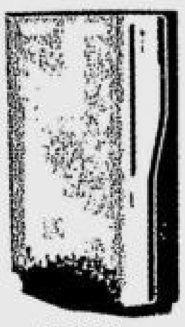
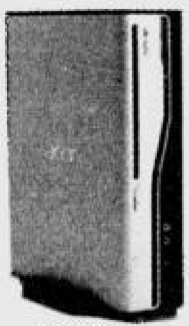


AP 1000



AP 2000

Gone are the days when the size of the computer equates to power and might. The bigger, the better is no longer applicable. In this age where "nanotechnology" is the buzzword, computers that are small and compact, yet pack whooping power, are much sought after.

Realizing this, Acer, one of the world's top computer manufacturers, came up with its new line of "ultra small form-factor" PCs for the world to admire: the Acer Aspire L310, the Acer Power 1000 and the Acer Power 2000.

Though small and compact, since it is 90 percent smaller and 75 percent lighter than conventional tower desktops, power is definitely not lacking in these three truly innovative IT tools. Powered by the latest Intel Core 2 Duo processors over Intel Express chipsets and complemented by an L2 memory cache, the Acer Power 2000 and Aspire L310 are definitely no pushovers despite their diminutive size. Having the Intel Core 2 Duo processor guarantees maximum performance at less power consumption.

On the other hand, the AcerPower 1000 comes with AMD's latest selection of processors, from the Sempron to the powerful AMD Athlon 64 X2 for balanced performance and overall value.

These three compact CPUs have DDR II SDRAM memory upgradeable to 2GB, 80GB up to 400GB SATA hard drives for all those humongous office files, photos, and videos, and an integrated 7.1 channel surround sound, high-definition audio card for those booming bass and crispy trebles when watching blockbuster movies or playing heart-pounding online or PC games played through their Super Multi optical drive. The only difference is the on-board graphics card since the Acer Power 2000 and Aspire L310 both carry Intel GMA 3000 while the AcerPower 1000 carries the NVIDIA GeForce 6150 graphics card.

But compared to other conventional desktop tower PCs that are 10 times bigger, this triumvirate of Acer compact CPUs run whisper-quiet (around 26dB on idle mode), thus making these three as perfect tools for a business environment that requires space-saving solutions yet needs to ensure maximum comfort and high productivity in the office.

And since Microsoft's brand-new OS Vista is now in town, expect the Veriton 1000, the Aspire L310, and the AcerPower 1000 to give other Vista-running PCs a run for their money primarily because of their ultra small form factor look that would fit any room or office table.

Just like all the other PCs in the Acer product range, all three carry the trademark Acer Empowering Technology that practically enhances the way people use their PCs. And complemented by Acer's world-class technical support system, the Acer Power 2000, the Aspire L310, and AcerPower 1000 are expected to set a new trend in the compact CPU space. Truly, these three gadgets deliver maximum performance in their power-packed size, yet using but a small portion of the workspace.

For details on how to get hold of the Aspire L310, and the AcerPower 1000 and 2000, contact your nearest Acer reseller and find out for yourself how they can change the way you do your business. ADVT

PUJADA NICKEL PROJECT. Natural Resources Secretary Angelo T. Reyes signs the orders transferring seven Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSA) covering the Hallmark Nickel Project in Pujada Peninsula, Davao Oriental to Hallmark Mining Corp. and Australasia Link Mining. Both companies have partnered with BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining company, for the development of the nickel project. Witnessing the signing are BHP Billiton chief development officer Chris Campbell (left) and Philip Hopskins (right), group manager for regional development.

Gov't readies '07 list of preferred areas

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS IDENTIFIED industries that are likely to be included in the Investment Priorities Plan (IPP) for 2007, the list of preferred investment areas that will be accorded various fiscal incentives.

The draft IPP list, which is still subject to deliberations by concerned line agencies, covers 12 industries such as the following: Agriculture, fishery and support services; healthcare and wellness products and services; information and communications technology; electronics; motor vehicle products;

Energy; infrastructure; tourism; shipbuilding/shipping; iron and steel; research and development/training institutions, and machinery and equipment, raw materials and intermediate inputs in support of the activities listed in the IPP.

Except for the last three, these industries had been in the previous IPP lists.

Jewelry and fashion garments, which had been in the previous lists, were not included in the draft 2007 IPP.

The proposed additions to the list came up during a series of discussions and public hearings organized by concerned agencies—the Board of Investments, the Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Industries included in the IPP list, which is renewed every year, enjoy fiscal incentives such as income tax holiday (ITH), tax- and duty-free importation of capital equipment, and exemption from local taxes.

According to a paper prepared by concerned agencies, the government would keep the theme "Propelling the Nation to First World Status in 20 years" as the focus of the development of the IPP list.

On top of this list, the BOI wants to maintain a special list of companies that may be granted incentives although they do not belong to industries listed in the IPP. These companies are those that may fall under the government's "Retention, Expansion and Diversification program," or RED.

A government source explained that companies to be included in the RED program are those considered playing a vital investment role but do not belong to the IPP.

Manufacturing firm Unilever Philippines, the source said, was one of those proposed for inclusion in the RED program.

The source, however, said the DOF was questioning the process of determining the companies to be included in the RED program.

The BOI has the sole authority to determine which companies will qualify for the RED program. The DOF wants the composition of the RED, as well as the criteria in the selection process, be determined by all three agencies concerned and not just the BOI.

In a previous study commissioned by the DOF, 83 percent of the incentives granted to BOI-registered firms were considered "redundant," meaning investments would have been made anyway even without the granting of incentives.

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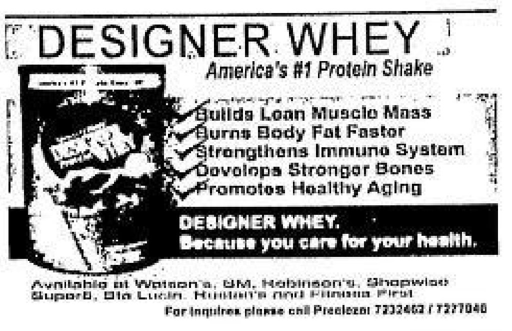
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WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

The bone robbers

Part One

BONES ARE IN A constant state of building up and breaking down. Every year, 20-30 percent of an adult skeleton is "new."

When you are young, there is more bone building than there is bone breakdown. That's why childhood is the time to build bone strength.

Until the age of 40, both phases are more or less equal, assuming you are not abusing your bones. After 40, the breakdown gradually begins to exceed buildup.

This happens to everyone, men and women alike, in varying degrees. Women, however, experience more rapid bone loss after menopause because of declining estrogen levels.

Everyone's goal should be to slow down the natural aging of bones and not hasten it with poor lifestyle habits or "bone robbers."

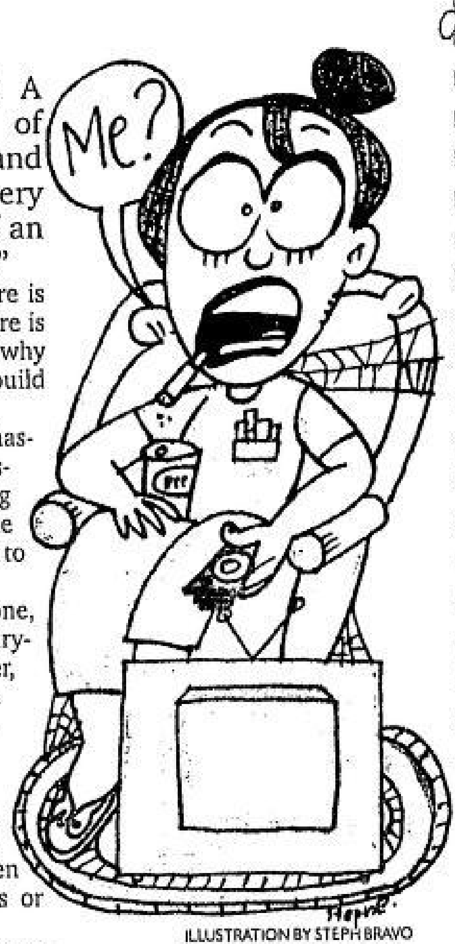

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

"A high calcium intake will not protect a person against bone loss caused by estrogen deficiency, physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol abuse and various medical disorders and treatments," according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

Physical inactivity

When people experience prolonged bed rest or immobilization, they lose bone. The same thing happens to astronauts who fly long missions in the weightlessness of outer space.

Bones need the "stress" of physical activity to stay healthy.

In a 10-year Penn State University study of Caucasian girls aged 12-22, it was found that exercise had a more significant impact in building bone than calcium intake.

It doesn't pay to be a couch potato at any age. In a Tufts University study, postmenopausal women who were not on hormone replacement therapy did strength training for one year. They increased bone density by 1 percent while the sedentary control group lost 2 percent of their bone density.

Men usually lose bone more slowly than women because they start out with a higher bone mass and do not undergo menopause.

But if they lead *señorito* lives, they are at higher risk than women of fractures as seen in a study in a rural Turkish village where women traditionally did all the hard physical work.

Smoking

The National Institutes of Health state the longer you smoke and the more cigarettes you consume, the greater your risk of fracture in old age. Both men and women smokers have significant bone loss when they get older.

Exactly why smoking affects bones is not clear. It could be due to smoking itself or because smokers tend to have other risk factors like alcohol abuse, less physical activity and poor diets.

Women smokers also tend to produce less estrogen and experience early menopause, both of which accelerate bone loss.

Alcohol

Excessive alcohol consumption is associated with low bone density and a higher risk of fractures, according to studies of alcoholics. Moderate alcohol intake, meanwhile, is associated with higher bone density in postmenopausal women.

Researchers believe alcohol increases estrogen levels. Unfortunately, it also increases the risk of breast cancer.

Dieting

Dieting may be good for your figure but it isn't good for your bones. A Rutgers University study found that just six months of dieting decreased bone density by 3 percent.

Researchers say losing weight can cause a change in three hormones (parathyroid, estrogen and cortisol) that affect the absorption and utilization of calcium.

However, results of a Washington University study show that, while losing weight through diet causes bone loss, losing weight by exercising does not.

The diet-only group ate 16 percent fewer calories for three months and 20 percent for nine months. The exercise-only group did not reduce calories but increased energy expenditure through exercise by 16 percent for three months and 20 percent for nine months.

The diet-only group lost more weight (18.1 pounds compared to 14.8 pounds) but it also lost more bone—an average of 2.2 percent at the lower spine, hip and top of the thighbone. The exercise-only group did not lose any bone.

So, if you need to lose weight, don't just diet. Make sure to include weight bearing, impact and muscle strengthening exercises to protect your bones.

Severe restriction of calories (chronic crash dieting, anorexia nervosa, bulimia) has a very negative effect on bones because of the hormonal imbalances dieting produces.

So does a condition called Female Athlete Triad, in which athletes do not get enough calories for the rigorous training they undergo. Their menstrual periods even stop.

The sad part is that bone loss in young women can be irreversible. In a 1997 study, female athletes with eating disorders and menstrual abnormalities did not have normal bone mass density four years after their menses returned despite estrogen hormone therapy and calcium supplementation.

Very thin women are at greater risk of osteoporosis or brittle bones than women of normal weight.

One scientist suggested there might be a good reason menopausal women put on a little extra weight even if they exercised and watched their diet. Estrogen isn't just made in the ovaries. It can also be synthesized by fat tissue. Perhaps that small padding of fat is nature's way of protecting your bones.

Sources: National Osteoporosis Foundation, National Institutes of Health—Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases Well-Connected Reports, Nidus Information Services
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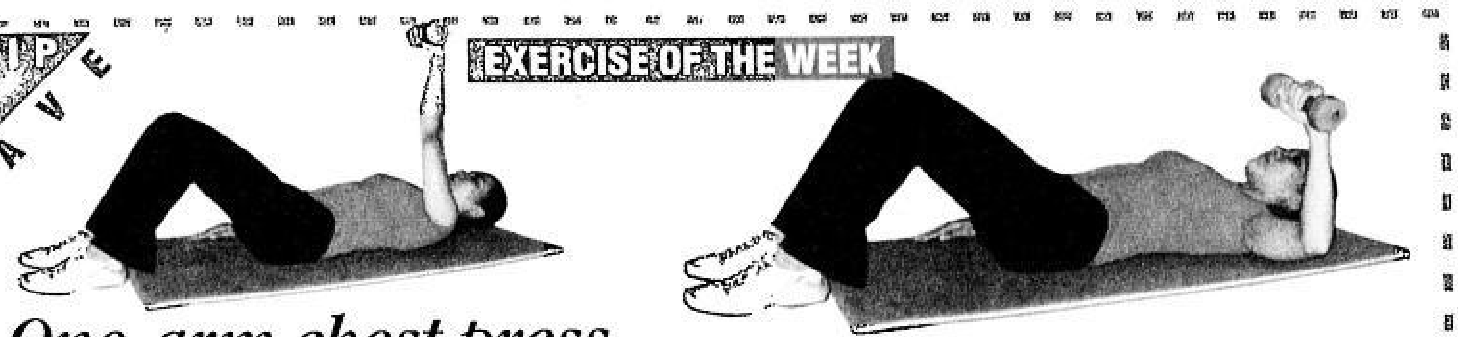
CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



One-arm chest press

STRENGTHENS THE MUSCLES OF THE chest, as well as core muscles

Equipment:

Gym bench or exercise mat and dumbbell

Exercise technique:

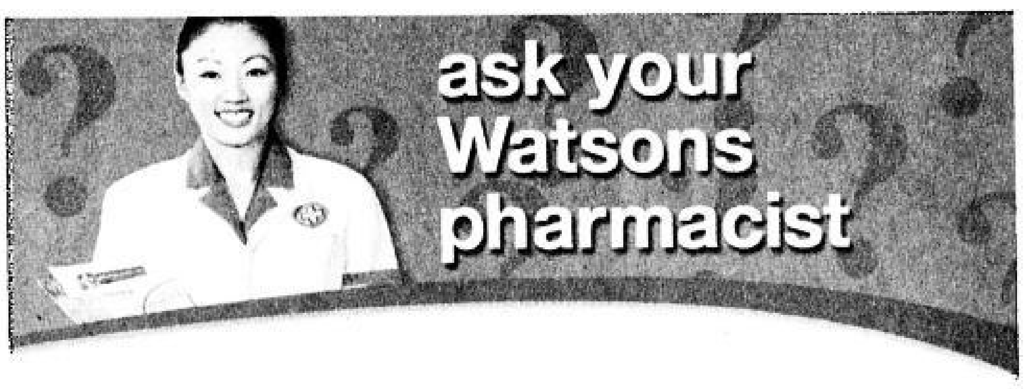
1. Lie down with knees bent and a dumbbell in your right hand.
2. Bring the dumbbell directly over your shoulder joint. This is your starting position.
3. Activate the core muscles by tightening them as you lower the dumbbell. Your elbows should not go past your shoulder joint.
4. Slowly press the dumbbell back to the starting position.
5. Perform the desired number of repetitions. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:

1. Since all the weight is on one side, your core muscles have to work hard to stabilize your torso and hips.
2. Use a lesser poundage than what you are accustomed to.
3. Do not be surprised at how hard your core muscles have to work.
4. Inhale as you lower the dumbbell; exhale as you straighten your arm.

Repetitions:

Do 12-15 repetitions on each side.



Q: **How effective are condoms?**

A: Condoms are safe and effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly and consistently. Condoms block the exchange of body fluids and disease agents to protect users from sexually transmitted infections and HIV / AIDS.

Q: **Do condoms reduce sexual pleasure?**

A: Most couples do not feel any difference in sensation while using condoms. Couples enjoy intimate moments more because they are free from worry about unplanned pregnancy or STIs.

Q: **Can condoms help prevent cervical cancer?**

A: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women, with mortality rate to rise by almost 25% over the next 10 years. Condoms reduce the risk of human papillomavirus, the virus that causes venereal warts (in the genital area) that can lead to cervical cancer.

Reference.
WHO. "New Vaccines Against Cervical Cancer Major Opportunity for Developing World." London/Geneva: WHO [press release]. 2006 Dec 12.

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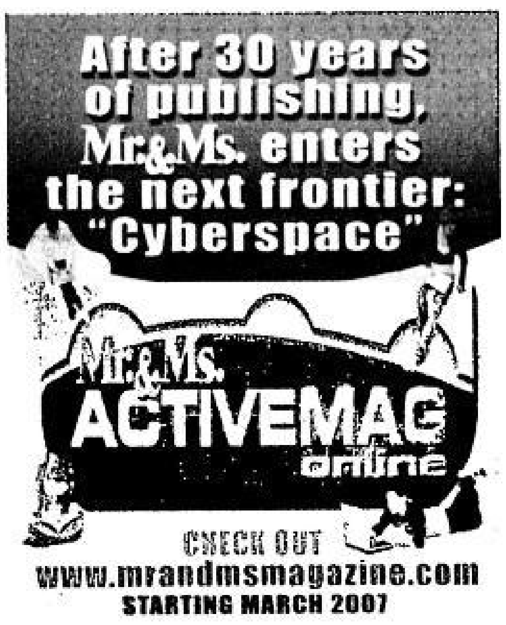
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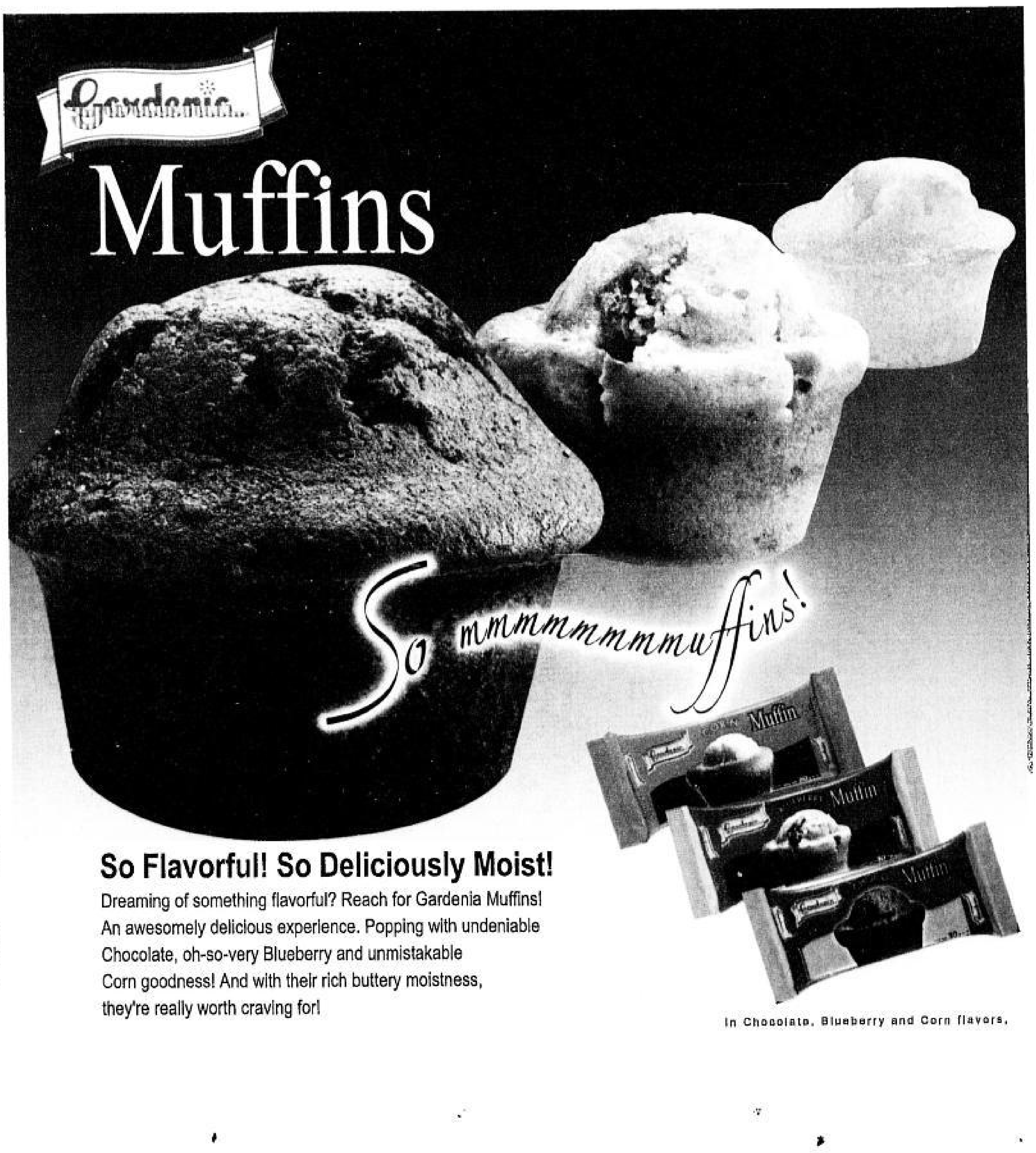
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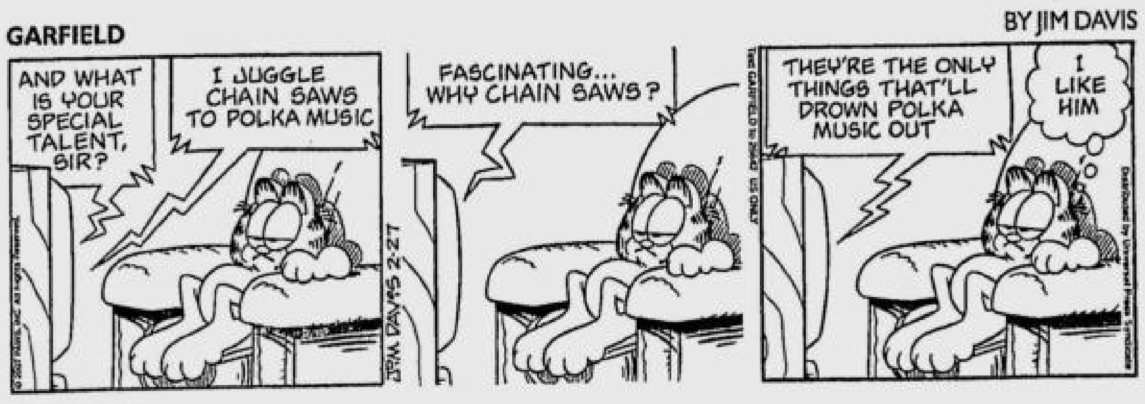
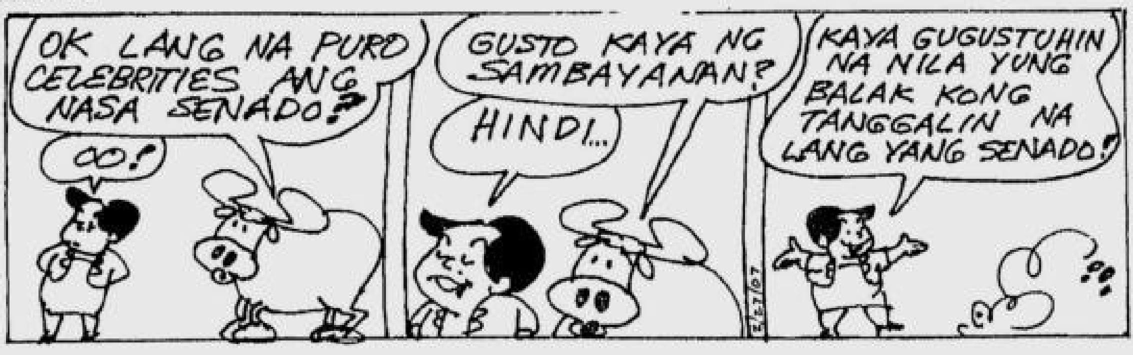
So mmmmmmmmuffins!
So Flavorful! So Deliciously Moist!
Dreaming of something flavorful? Reach for Gardenia Muffins!
An awesomely delicious experience. Popping with undeniable
Chocolate, oh-so-very Blueberry and unmistakable
Corn goodness! And with their rich buttery moistness,
they're really worth craving for!
In Chocolate, Blueberry and Corn flavors.

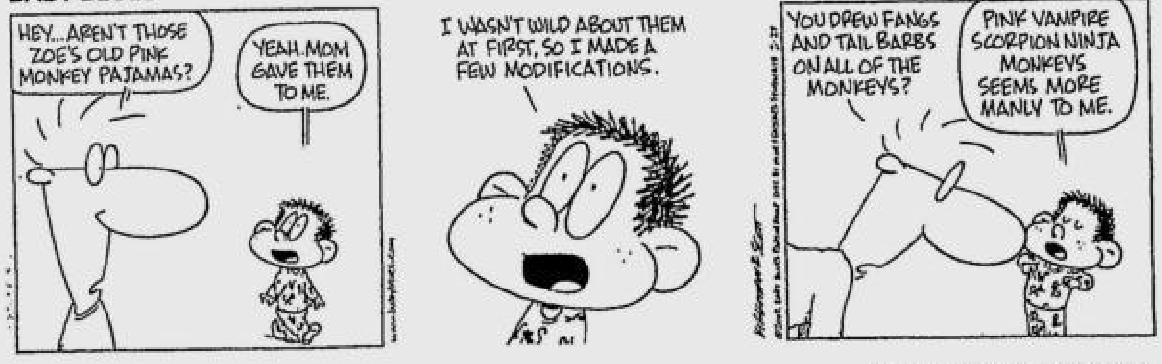
GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS


AND WHAT IS YOUR SPECIAL TALENT, SIR?
I JUGGLE CHAIN SAWS TO POLKA MUSIC
FASCINATING... WHY CHAIN SAWS?
THEY'RE THE ONLY THINGS THAT'LL DROWN POLKA MUSIC OUT
I LIKE HIM
JIM DAVIS 2-27

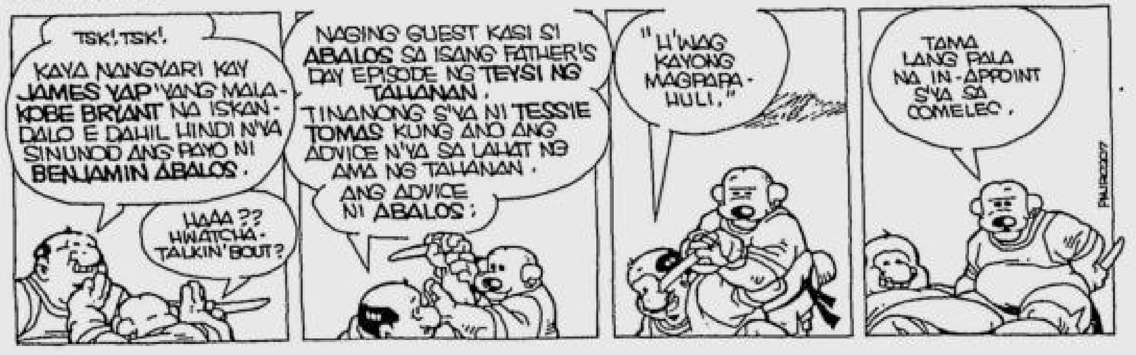
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


OK LANG NA PURO CELEBRITIES ANG NASA SENADO?
OO!
GUSTO KAYA NG SAMBAYANAN?
HINDI...
KAYA GUGUSTUHIN NA NILA YUNG BALAK KONG TANGGALIN NA LANG YANG SENADO!

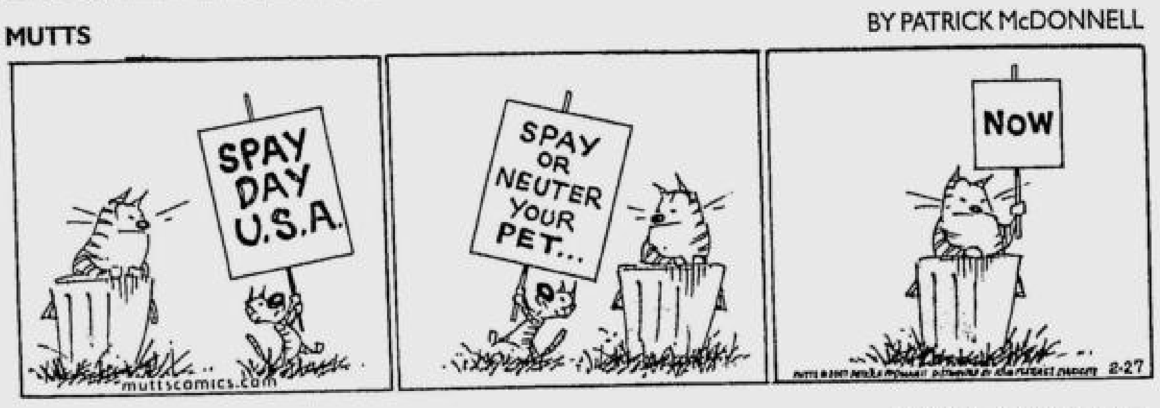
BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY... AREN'T THOSE ZOE'S OLD PINK MONKEY PAJAMAS?
YEAH. MOM GAVE THEM TO ME.
I WASN'T WILD ABOUT THEM AT FIRST, SO I MADE A FEW MODIFICATIONS.
YOU DREW FANGS AND TAIL BARBS ON ALL OF THE MONKEYS?
PINK VAMPIRE SCORPION NINJA MONKEYS SEEMS MORE MANLY TO ME.

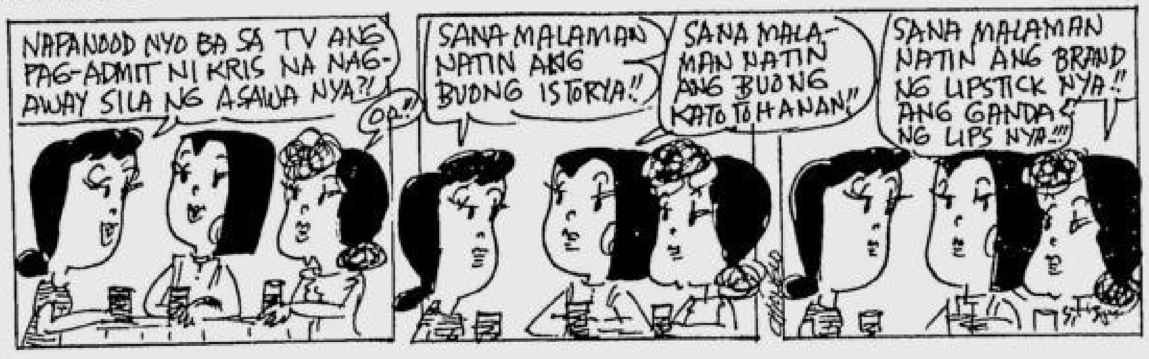
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


TSK! TSK!
KAYA NANGYARI KAY JAMES YAP 'YANG MALA-KOBE BRYANT NA ISKANDALO E DAHIL HINDI N'YA SINUNOD ANG PAYO NI BENJAMIN ABALOS.
HAAA?? HWATCHA-TALKIN' BOUT?
NAGING GUEST KASI SI ABALOS SA ISANG FATHER'S DAY EPISODE NG TEYSI NG TAHANAN. TINANONG S'YA NI TESSIE TOMAS KUNG ANO ANG ADVICE N'YA SA LAHAT NG AMA NG TAHANAN. ANG ADVICE NI ABALOS:
"H'WAG KAYONG MAGPAPAHULI."
TAMA LANG PALA NA IN-APPOINT S'YA SA COMELEC.

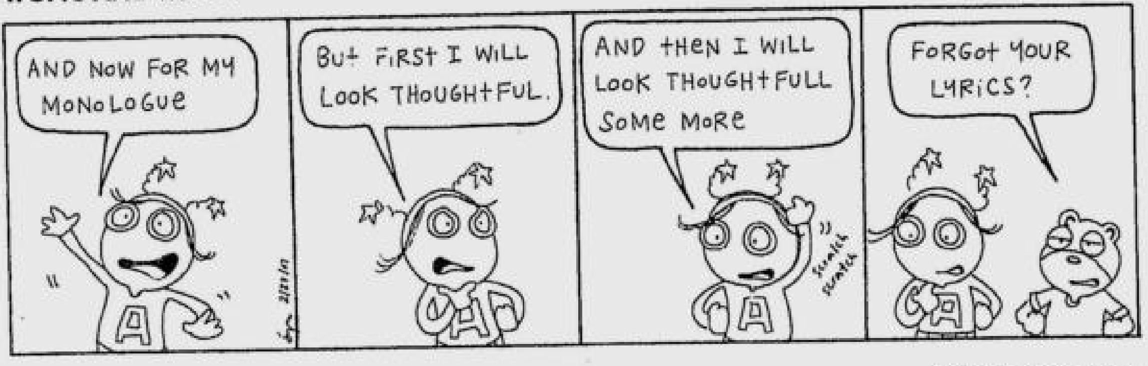
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SPAY DAY U.S.A.
SPAY OR NEUTER YOUR PET...
NOW
mutts comics.com
2-27

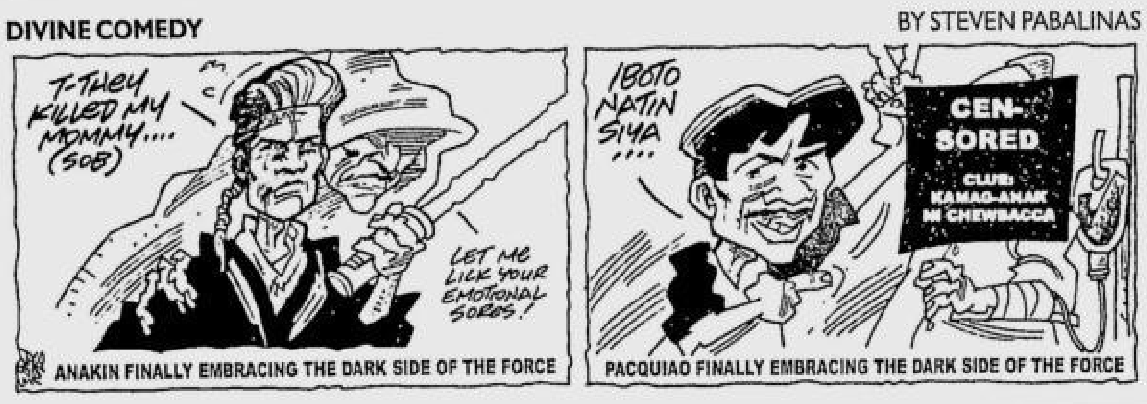
LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAPANOOD NYO BA SA TV ANG PAG-ADMIT NI KRIS NA NAG-AAWAY SILA NG ASAWA NYA?!
OO!
SANA MALAMAN NATIN ANG BUONG ISTORYA!!
SANA MALAMAN NATIN ANG BUONG KATOTOHANAN!!
SANA MALAMAN NATIN ANG BRAND NG LIPSTICK NYA!! ANG GANDA NG LIPS NYA!!!

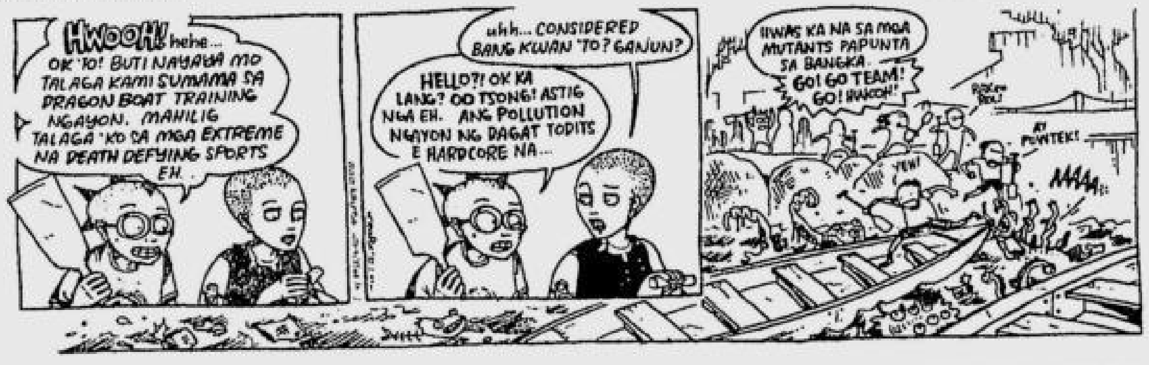
ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AND NOW FOR MY MONOLOGUE
But FIRST I WILL LOOK THOUGHtFUL.
AND then I WILL LOOK THOUGHtFULL SOME MORE
Scratch scratch
FORGot YOUR LYRICS?

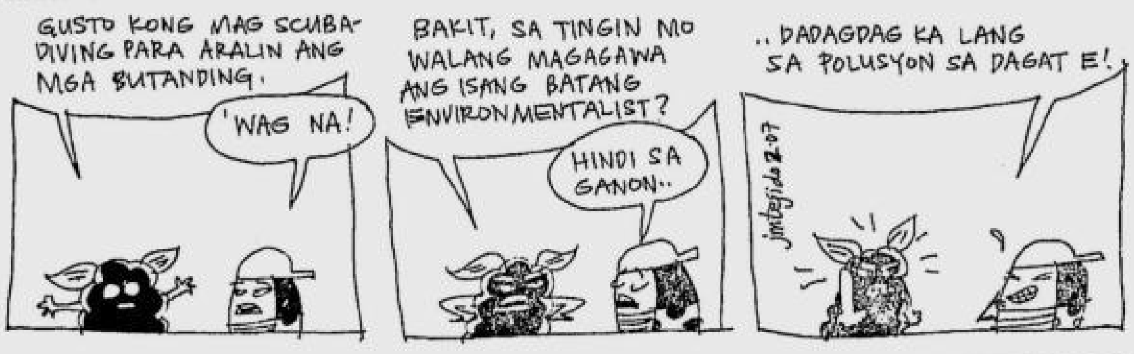
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


T-THEY KILLED MY MOMMY.... (SOB)
LET ME LICK YOUR EMOTIONAL SORES!
ANAKIN FINALLY EMBRACING THE DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE
IBOTO NATIN SIYA ....
CEN-SORED
CLUB: KAMAG-ANAK NI CHEWBACCA
PACQUIAO FINALLY EMBRACING THE DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE

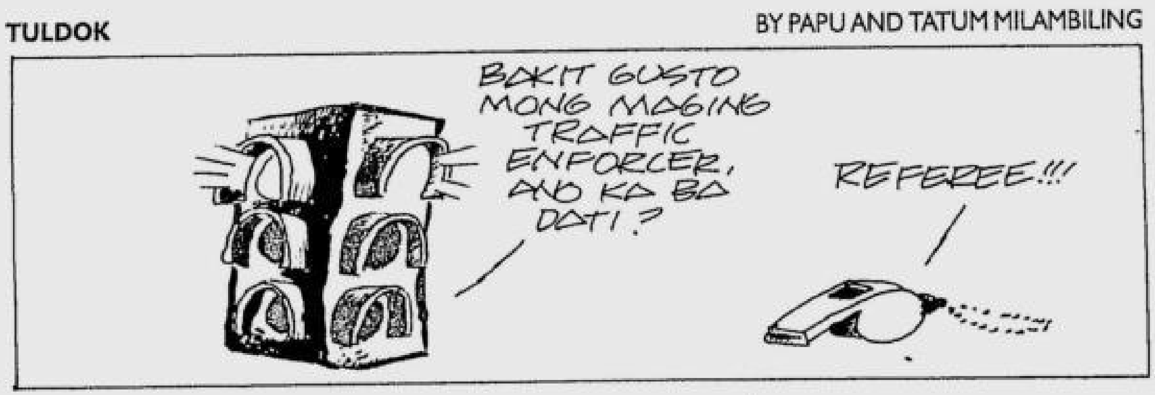
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! hehe... OK 'TO! BUTI NAYAYA MO TALAGA KAMI SUMAMA SA DRAGON BOAT TRAINING NGAYON. MAHILIG TALAGA 'KO SA MGA EXTREME NA DEATH DEFYING SPORTS EH.
uhh... CONSIDERED BANG KUWAN 'TO? GANUN?
HELLO?! OK KA LANG? OO TSONG! ASTIG NGA EH. ANG POLLUTION NGAYON NG DAGAT TODITS E HARDCORE NA...
IWAS KA NA SA MGA MUTANTS PAPUNTA SA BANGKA. GO! GO TEAM! GO! HWOOH!
PUWTEK!
YEW!
AAAA...

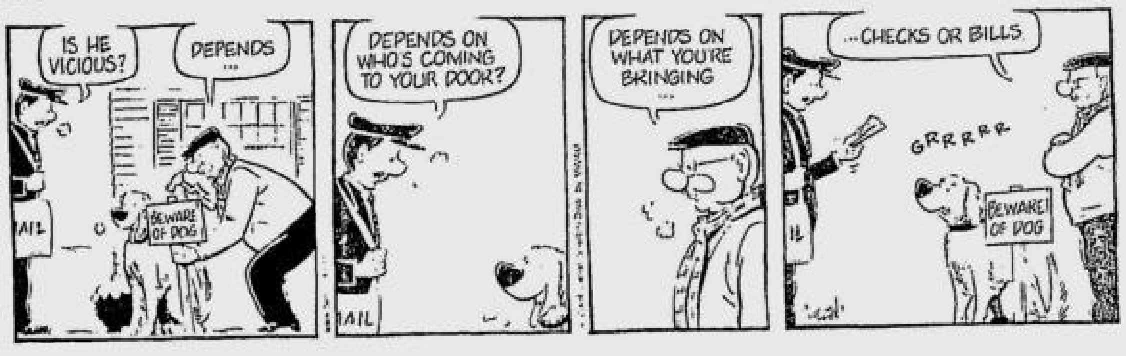
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GUSTO KONG MAG SCUBA-DIVING PARA ARALIN ANG MGA BUTANDING.
'WAG NA!
BAKIT, SA TINGIN MO WALANG MAGAGAWA ANG ISANG BATANG ENVIRONMENTALIST?
HINDI SA GANON..
.. DADAGDAG KA LANG SA POLUSYON SA DAGAT E!
jmtejido 2.07

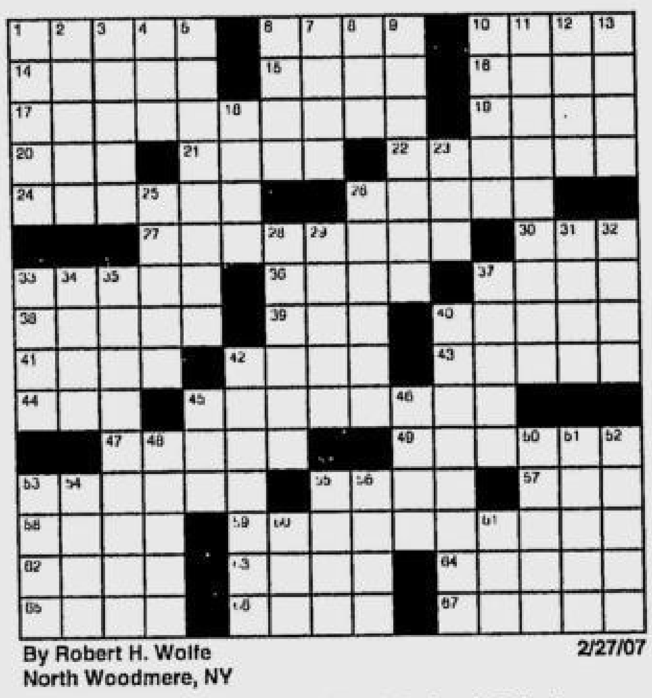
TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BAKIT GUSTO MONG MAGING TRAFFIC ENFORCER, ANO KA BA DATI?
REFEREE!!!

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


IS HE VICIOUS?
DEPENDS ...
BEWARE OF DOG
DEPENDS ON WHO'S COMING TO YOUR DOOR?
DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU'RE BRINGING ...
...CHECKS OR BILLS
GRRRRR
BEWARE OF DOG

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

2/27/07

ACROSS
1 Gondola's waterway
6 WWII battle site
10 ABA member
14 Cognizant
15 Blow over
16 Faithful
17 Create letters?
19 Clark's Smallville gal
20 Stretch (out)
21 Not well
22 Examples in context
24 Batted first
26 According to me!
27 Ex-convict
30 Dixie letters
33 Spoken or outspoken
36 Act of immoderate indulgence
37 Urban haze
38 Antiknock fluid
39 Loud clamor
40 Froth
41 Connections
42 "The African Queen" screenwriter
43 Actor Romero
44 Defunct pol. entity
45 Type of navigation
47 "M*A*S*H" role
49 Maintain
53 Antifreeze ingredient
55 Long tale
57 Brewed drink
58 Philbin's partner
59 Colored letters?
62 Enthusiastic
63 Olympus VIP
64 Battery part
65 Snafu
66 Tarzan Lincoln
67 Neon and radon

DOWN
1 Sahara mount
2 Fully conscious
3 Bare
4 Exist
5 Allows to drop
6 Little detail
7 Gas container
8 Baton Rouge sch.
9 Container for bones
10 Strongman
11 Sad letters?
12 Lilt
13 Votes for
18 Outmoded sound system
23 Barrett of early Pink Floyd
25 "Love Train" singers
26 Official seal
28 Boarder
29 Thorn bush
31 Living body
32 Ripener
33 Dog docs
34 Elevator man?
35 Red letters?
37 Incantation
40 Rascal
42 Examine methodically
45 Union-forming sentence
46 "Othello" conspirator
48 Schs.
50 Spirit of a people
51 Crystal-filled rock
52 Relaxes
53 Metric unit of mass
54 Part of "SNL"
55 Squalid urban area
56 As well
60 Moray ___
61 Cell letters

Monday's Puzzle Solved

F	O	R	M		W	A	S	P		S	C	R	A	M
I	H	O	P		A	R	C	H		T	R	E	V	I
S	O	T	H	E	Y	S	A	Y		R	U	P	E	E
H	H	H		L	O	O	N	S		A	D	O	R	N
			N	O	U	N		I	N	N	E	R		
S	C	R	I	P	T		S	C	U	D		T	A	C
T	R	U	C	E		V	E	I	L	S		E	R	A
R	O	M	E		C	A	N	A	L		H	D	T	V
A	N	O		S	A	L	O	N		B	E	L	I	E
P	E	R		E	M	I	R		P	L	A	Y	E	D
		H	A	T	E	D		S	L	U	R			
S	C	A	R	F		A	S	C	O	T		E	W	E
L	O	S	E	R		T	H	E	W	O	R	D	I	S
O	P	I	N	E		E	I	N	E		K	E	L	P
B	E	T	T	E		S	P	E	D		O	N	L	Y

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2/27/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're naturally sophisticated and worldly. People are attracted to your charm. These qualities give you great skills when dealing with others. You don't accept things at face value; you question whatever you encounter. In the year ahead, something you've been involved with for the past nine years could end to make room for something new to enter.
Birthdate of: Chelsea Clinton, former first daughter; Elizabeth Taylor, actress; Marian Anderson, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a bit of a goofy day. If possible, stay at home and putter around your place. This is a poor day to make important decisions or spend money (except on food).

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Be extra careful in everything you do today. This is a mildly accident-prone day. Accidents don't have to happen; it's simply that you're a bit distracted.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Even though you're attracted to financial transactions today, this is a poor day for money deals. It's also a poor day to shop for anything except food. Save your hard-earned cash!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today the Moon is in your sign, but it is what astrologers call void-of-course. This means that everything is a bit wonky and loosey-goosey. Just kick back and relax if you can. Don't do anything important.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't worry if you feel vaguely restless and a bit at loose ends. This is par for the course today. Instead, indulge your creative side.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day for casual conversations with friends. However, avoid important decisions. Don't make promises to anyone. Just go with the flow.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't talk to your boss today about anything important. Don't agree to any important deadlines; avoid making commitments or accepting any important projects.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You'll enjoy exploring new ideas about religion, politics or philosophical concepts. Your mind seems to be free to float anywhere today! Just keep things light.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be concerned with shared property, debt and taxes today. However, this is a poor day for any kind of business decisions. Don't agree to how something should be shared or divided.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Conversations with partners and close friends are likely today. However, just explore ideas; do not make important decisions or choose a course of action. Wait until tomorrow.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're quite aggressive now, because Mars is in your sign. You're ready to go after whatever you want. Nevertheless, take it easy at work and with coworkers.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a wonderfully playful, creative day for your sign. Get together with others, and just enjoy yourself. Avoid important decisions. Laugh it up!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	8	4		1			2	
6					5			3
					4			9
	2	5		7				
8								5
				9		4	6	
4			3					
7			8					6
	1			2		8	5	

Difficulty Level ★★

2/27

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	8	2	6	7	4	5	9	1
1	7	4	3	5	9	8	6	2
6	9	5	1	2	8	3	7	4
5	1	9	2	6	3	4	8	7
8	6	7	4	9	5	2	1	3
2	4	3	8	1	7	9	5	6
7	5	6	9	4	2	1	3	8
4	3	1	5	8	6	7	2	9
9	2	8	7	3	1	6	4	5

Difficulty Level ★

SCHOOL PALS: Panay News society writer John Castigador with Councilor Jed Mabilog, Alex Soncio, and dance empress Susan Wang

BEVERLY "Pagging" Rosales and Tatler Magazine rep in Iloilo Nonoy Ybiernas

HAVING A BALL. Grace Aldeguer and Susie Facultad

ILOILO ROYALS IN THEIR HIGH SCHOOL UNIFORMS: Celebrator Sarah Opolencia P. with husband Judgee Lopez Peña and their daughters Risa, Rica, and Rita

A celebration of high school days

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

IT WAS A TRÉS SPECIAL bash, **palanggas**, done in the style of **Sarah Opolencia Peña.**

When one of the best dressed women and Metro Iloilo's top hostesses celebrated her special day, she relived her high school days with a "First Day High" bash at her sprawling residence at upscale Ledesco Village.

Many of the attendees arrived in their uniforms in high school in top universities and exclusive colleges in town. The celebrator's better half, sugar baron **Judgee Lopez Peña**, received the long line of well-wishers while Sarah changed into her La Consolacion College high school uniform. "Would you believe, I kept this (uniform) all this time, so I thought, 'Why not have a school theme party?'" she said with a naughty smile.

Jetting in from Manille were her three pretty brilliant daughters. **Rita** was in London boarding school outfit and **Risa** was in her Philippine Science High School uniform. The youngest, **Rica**, was in a St. Joseph Catholic School uniform.

The buffet table groaned from the sumptuous dishes prepared by the celebrator's favorite caterer, the incomparable chef **Wilson Esparancilla.** The bar overflowed with fine wine, high-end booze and ice cold beer, *natch*!

Après dinner, a super fun special dance number was performed by the celebrator's closest pals. After the much-applauded number, it was time to rock and roll, *palanggas*. And rock they did almost till 3 a.m. to the sounds of the '70s and '80s played by master DJs **Erwin Deles** and **Robert Alejandria.**

The wining, dining, dancing and fun just went on and on.

As many guests said, "It's so Sarah's style," dahlings.

NUVO'S guest chef, Frenchman **Xavier BTesh,** with **Pepper Teehankee**

OGILVY'S workasonic mover and shaker Frank Briones and Elan's Cecille Lajyo

BELVEDERE GM Philip Opiasa with Cecille Lajyo, DJ Karl Ty, JR Isaac, and gorgeous model Bianca Valerio

Winter in Manille

Being a vodka drinker, *moi* have tried several kinds of top grade, high-end brands. And before I could even bat an eyelash, another vodka has hit the market, *palanggas*.

Belvedere, dahlings, one of the most premium vodkas in the world, was beautifully presented at the "Taste the Beautiful Life" party at the hard to beat Nuvo in Greenbelt 2.

White drapes and sofas created the atmosphere of a night of chilling at Nuvo. Adding to the wintry ambience were white twigs fashioned into the cool bottles of Belvedere, *palanggas*.

Wednesday instantly became the new party day as our town's beautiful people filled Nuvo with their dazzling presence. We were treated to a night of excellently prepared Belvedere martinis and cocktails.

An eye-catching intricately designed interactive ice bar was setup so that guests could concoct their own creations using Belvedere vodka as base, *natch*!

Adding to the fun night of mixing were the fab sounds of DJs **Cao Ocampo, Erwin Edralin, All Rock** and **Anton Ramos.**

After that first Wednesday, a new ice bar was carved each week for the series. Belvedere made the next Wednesdays at Nuvo awesome and beautiful, dahlings.

NUVO GM Edwin Macapagal with cyber smart Olga Azarcon of Moet Hennessy and Philip Opiasa, brand manager of Belvedere

MEN FOR RED CROSS: Vice Mayor Aldrin San Pedro with Cong. Ruffy Biazon, Manny Gonzales, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, Jr., Siegfredo Veloso, Jose Mari Duarte, Roland Pineda, Leslie Espino, Epi Joaquin, Elo Javier, Rene Quiroz, and Freddie Burgos

DOING the ribbon-snipping for the new Red Cross office in Alabang are Sylvia Lina with Trina Biazon, Loretta Fresnedi, Bishop Jesse Mercado, Diana Espino, and Lulu Quezon

New law firm

Their dream started back when they were classmates at Ateneo de Manila University College of Law, dahlings. The brilliant gang of four—Liza Marcos, Jojo Ochoa, Ed Serapio and Joseph Tan—talked about forming a law partnership.

Now, 25 years later, their dream has come true.

The offices of the Marcos Ochoa Serapio and Tan Law Firm were formally inaugurated. **Fr. Joaquin Bernas, SJ,** officiated at the blessing of the sleek New York-style office at the 30th floor of Tycoon Center in Pasig City.

The ribbon-snipping ceremony was led by popular Ilocos Norte Gov. **Bongbong Marcos**, dynamic Quezon City Mayor **Sonny Belmonte Jr.** and close pal San Juan Mayor **JV Ejercito**, *palanggas*.

After the blessing, the 200 or so invitees dashed to the Wack-Wack Golf and Country Club for cocktails followed by a buffet dinner excellently prepared by The Plaza.

During dinner, the guests were serenaded by the University of the Philippines' Singing Ambassadors. The hotshot invitees hopped from table to table, *palanggas*.

Then it was time to hit the dance floor and rock the place to rhythmic Brazilian tunes belted out by **Eileen Sison** and the Guarama Band. The dancing lasted way, way past midnight, *palanggas*.

Marcos Ochoa Serapio & Tan Law Firm is at the 30th floor, Tycoon Center, Pearl Drive, Ortigas, Pasig City 1605. Call 6382030 to 32 or 634-MOST; fax 6384255; e-mail inquiry@mostlawfirm.net; or visit http://www.mostfirm.net

Red ball

The Philippine National Red Cross, Muntinlupa Branch held a dinner dance at the *tres* popular Bellevue Hotel, dubbed "The Red Ball," the event raised funds for the Red Cross' various projects, *palanggas*. **Boy Arceo** was chair of the event and **Mimi Valerio** was co-chair.

The Muntinlupa Red Cross office is at the Alabang Town Center fronting Zapote Road. It has been put up through the kind-hearted cooperation of Barangay Ayala Alabang, Ayala Alabang Village Association and Alabang Town Center. Mayor **Jaime Fresnedi** is honorary chair, dahlings.

Council members who made all this possible are **Manny Gonzales,** chair; **Epi Joaquin,** vice chair; **Salvador Arceo Jr.,** secretary; **Rene Quiroz,** treasurer; and **Freddie Xerez-Burgos,** auditor. Members are **Gerardo Borromeo, José Mari Duarte** and **Rolando Pineda. Marcelo Javier Jr.** is executive director.

The office was located in a mall "to bring it closer to the people, and for higher visibility, especially, for those who will be in dire need of blood. Rich and poor alike will not hesitate to donate blood, since the office is accessible to all," explained chair Manny, *palanggas*.

JANET Camarista with Ellena Javellana and Lee J. Palmares

HOST Judgee Lopez Peña with the B-day gal Sarah O. Peña and business magnate brothers Franklin and Ross Gorriceta

LINDA Hoblitzel, mother of singer Cynthia Patag

DIRECTOR Zinnia Teruel

MAYOR JV Ejercito

ILOCOS Norte Gov. Bongbong Marcos

QUEZON City Mayor Sonny Belmonte

TOASTING A PARTNERSHIP: Father Bernas with brilliant lawyers Joseph Tan, Ed Serapio, Jojo Ochoa, and Louise "Liza" Araneta Marcos

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INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

You are not helpless against stress

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

A STATEMENT OFTEN HEARD everyday is: "I'm stressed out." Who isn't?

If you are stressed out, how do you deal with it?

Coping

Whatever type of stress you have—physical, emotional, mental—know that something can be done about it. You are not helpless and your situation is not hopeless.

Keep in mind what Charles Darwin said about survival: It is really not the fittest who survive but those who can best cope with their environment.

There is an efficient coping system inside our bodies. It is called the adrenal system and is regulated by the adrenal gland located on top of each kidney.

The sympathetic nervous system also plays a major role in stress-coping.

When the body is under extreme stress, the level of cortisol, a key adrenal hormone connected with stress, will either be too high or too low.

In either case, the imbalance compromises the immune system. For example, high cortisol levels can lower the body's defense mechanism making the human body more susceptible to viral and bacterial infections like colds, flu. It can even impair memory and lead to Alzheimer's disease.

Hans Selye, a well-known pioneering researcher, discovered the general adaptation syndrome and the three distinct stages of stress:

Alarm. When stress occurs, the adrenal hormone production increases to combat it. If successful, adrenal function returns to normal.

Resistance. If the adrenals are unable to meet the body's requirements, there is an enlargement of the glands. Symptoms include fatigue, insomnia, back/foot pain.

Exhaustion. Extreme tiredness is a result of a failure of the adrenals to adapt to stress and can lead to illness.

Stress symptom checklist

Check for these symptoms of adrenal dysfunction:

- low energy
- dizziness upon standing
- sensitivity of eyes to bright light
- asthma/allergies
- musculo-skeletal symptoms (as in foot/ankle pain)
- stress-related syndromes—nervous breakdown, burnout, overeating, overworking out/exercising
- blood-sugar handling stress (constant feeling of hunger, irritability, strong cravings)
- insomnia
- low sex drive
- seasonal affective disorder (SAD)—metabolism slows and the body is sluggish, often sleepy

What to do

If you feel you have adrenal dysfunction, here's what to do:

- Cut back, if not eliminate, sugar.
- Assess your caffeine intake. A cup or two may be tolerable. See how much caffeine your body can take.
- Take your zinc. This mineral has been known to lower cortisol levels.
- Take choline supplements. Found best in egg yolks, small amounts of choline can help those who are overworked.
- Consider L-glutamine should intestinal disorders like indigestion occur (as a result of stress). It helps in nutrient absorption.
- Exercise. A moderate regimen will help you ease stress.
- Get a massage.
- Take in the sun. Just a walk in early morning light can relax you by stimulating the brain.
- Listen to pleasant/relaxing music.
- Take natural hormones (if menopausal or premenopausal) from wild yam, licorice root, *dong quai* found in health food stores.
- Learn releasing techniques. If you can't take all the bottled-up stress, release it by:
- Laughing with friends—being with people you love/like helps especially if you laugh.
- Shouting it out—scream/shout out loud at the top of your voice in the open sea, the middle of a park or forest, on top of a mountain, inside a cave. If you can't get away, go inside your bathroom.
- Break a plate—do it without harming yourself or others. Throw the plate against a wall. The sound of something crashing can break your spell of depression or anger.
- Take up boxing to release your pent-up anger.
- Put up a sign—write on a piece of paper and post it somewhere obvious: "This too shall pass."

Love and light!

Reference: In Fitness and in Health, by Dr. Philip Maffetone

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Your Doctor Knows Best

Eugene B. Reyes, MD, FPCP, FPCC

Question:

I sometimes feel pain in my nape area, feel dizzy and has headache often. Could this mean that I have high blood pressure?

Doctor says...

PAIN or numbness in the nape area, headaches and getting dizzy often could not necessarily mean that you are hypertensive. As a matter of fact, people who have high blood pressure often do not feel any symptoms at all.

High blood pressure or hypertension does not present with any identifiable symptoms, that is why it is called a "silent killer". You may be going through your daily routines without even knowing that your blood pressure is already way above the ideal. The best way to know if you are hypertensive is to have your blood pressure checked by a healthcare professional.

One can be called hypertensive if his blood pressure is persistently elevated. An elevated blood pressure is defined as a blood pressure reading of 140 on systolic (the first number in a blood pressure reading) and 90 on diastolic (the second number in a blood pressure reading).

For adults, the ideal blood pressure should be maintained at less than or equal to 130/80, especially for those who have other conditions like diabetes and heart failure. However, the lower the blood pressure, the better. For me, the ideal blood pressure for adults should be maintained at less than or equal to 120/70.

There are a lot of factors that could put a person at risk for hypertension. First among these is having a parent who is hypertensive. Second is bad habits, like eating salty foods, sedentary lifestyle, stress, obesity and smoking. And finally, aging is a risk factor that one cannot prevent. Reaching the age of 55 and above increases one's chances of developing hypertension.

If you are hypertensive, you may be at risk of developing other diseases or conditions associated with high blood pressure like diabetes, obesity, and metabolic syndrome. It even increases one's chances of having heart attack, stroke, eye and kidney diseases, and problems with blood flow in the arteries.

The best way to manage hypertension is to change your lifestyle. Start with a healthy diet by eating less salt, avoiding monosodium glutamate, and by eating more fruits and vegetables. Avoiding smoking, achieving ideal weight by reducing caloric intake and exercising regularly, can also help manage hypertension.

When everything else fails, start drug treatment. Individualized treatment is what I recommend. If you are hypertensive, try to target normal blood pressure, which is less than or equal 120/70 and not 140/90. Remember that for blood pressure, the lower, the better.

Most importantly, always consult your doctor for the right treatment for your hypertension.

Dr. Reyes is a Cardiologist. He has clinics at the Manila Doctors Hospital, Cardiac Care Center, and Philippine General Hospital.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor

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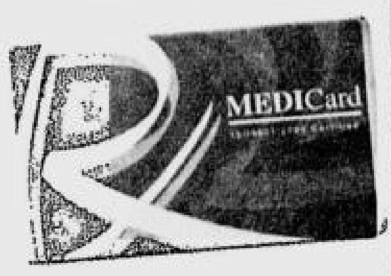


When should a woman start seeing her Gynecologist?

Gynecologists are the most frequently visited health professionals by the female population. Women seek gynecologic consult anytime during her lifetime from early childhood, to adulthood, to old age. There are various opinions when a female should first see her gynecologist. Some say as soon as "menarche "or her first menstruation and others opt to seek consultation once they are sexually active. There are questions that only a gynecologist can answer like issues regarding gynecologic pathology, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, infertility and routine Pap Smear are among the most common concerns of females in the reproductive age. One need not be symptomatic when deciding to see her doctor. However, majority delay their visit until problems are bothersome, reasons being financial or lack of patient education. In the advent of early sexual practices of our generation, and recent advances in medical science, particularly the availability of vaccines for the prevention of cervical cancer, I would personally advice gynecologic consult early, at puberty, the age group between 9-13 years old. Guidance and patient awareness are very important. Filipino women in general are shy when it comes to sexuality and sexual activities. It is for this reason that I encourage them to look for a gynecologist whom they are comfortable with, one whom they trust. This doctor – patient relationship would result to good compliance. Disease prevention, early diagnosis, and proper treatment would then be easily attained. So, go and see your gynecologist today.

This week's feature question is courtesy of Dr. Catherine Joie Carelle Roux-Ong. Dra. Carelle specializes in OB-Gynecology. She earned her medical degree at the University of Sto. Tomas, followed by her residency training for a specialization in OB-Gynecology from Chinese General Hospital & Medical Center. She is a member of the Philippine Medical Association and a diplomate of the Philippine Obstetrical & Gynecological Society. Dra. Carelle is married to a surgeon, Dr. Bilson Ong and is blessed with a child, Carlos Benedict. MEDICard members may visit her for consultations at Centralle Medical & Diagnostic Clinic every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 2-5pm.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

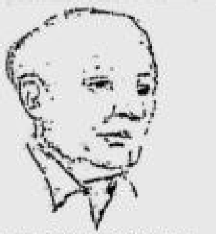
[illegible]

INNER AWARENESS

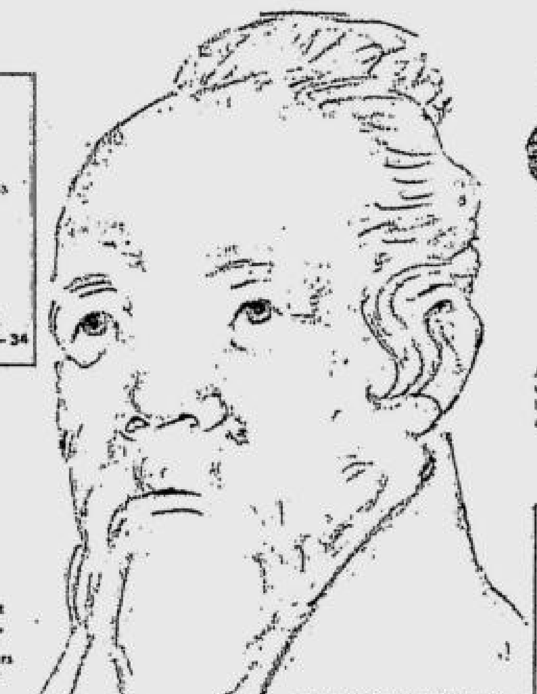
Jaime Licauco

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PSYCHIC PHENOMENA BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK – 34

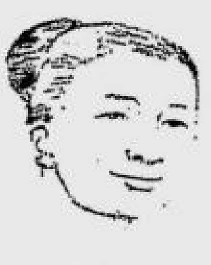
Drawings of JTL's spirit guides:



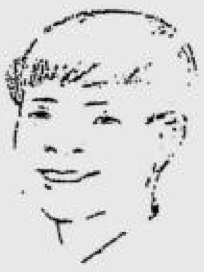
This man must be one of your spirit helpers – he is an American doctor, killed I think in the war, having worked in the far east for some years – he would I feel have known your part of the world quite well.



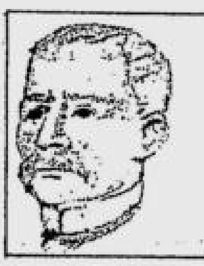
This old Chinese helper goes back to the Ming era – he is a tiny old soul with silver white hair.



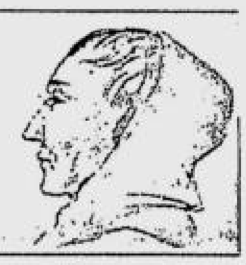
A beautiful young lady who is I suspect showing herself at a much younger age than her passing.



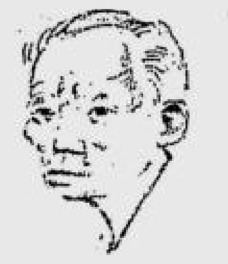
A young passing – tho' I feel that he was a little older than pictured here. A lovely happy soul – always smiling. He would I feel have died with a chest infection.



Do you have any European ancestry? This man is definitely from this side of the world but has, I suspect, some link with your family.



A gentle soul who gives me the name of Brother Paul – he wears a white habit and would I feel be a spiritual teacher.



How do we meet our spirit guides?

My seven spirit guides

Part 2

Despite my skepticism, I have come to accept that I have helpers in my work on planet Earth in this lifetime

I HAD ALREADY COMPLETELY forgotten Betina Loman's revelation about my spirit guides, when I happened to meet Tom Johansson in Manila seven years later.

Tom is an internationally known spiritual healer from England and we quickly became close friends. He told me that his former wife, Coral Polge, a medium, could see clairvoyantly a person's spirit guides and draw them on paper simply by looking at a person's handwriting.

So I made a handwritten request for Coral that Tom promised to give to her when he returned to England.

Because she received so many requests from people around the world, it took many months before I received a reply from Coral.

But what she told me was worth the long wait!

She said I had seven spirit guides. I was shocked! I never told Tom or her about the seven spirit guides that Loman said I had.

Not only that, Coral even drew and described each of my guides (see illustrations).

Old soul

One of my guides, she said, was an old Chinese helper during the Ming Era. "He is a tiny old soul with silver white hair."

Another is "an American doctor who was killed during the war. He had worked in the Far East for some years."

Another is "a beautiful young lady who I suspect is showing herself at a much younger age than her passing."

Another is a young boy, "a lovely, happy soul always smiling."

Another is "a European man with some link to your family." She asked me, "Do you have a European ancestor?" Yes, I am a direct blood descendant of the very Spanish-looking 19th-century Filipino painter Damian Domingo.

There is another guide who gave his name as Paul. "He wore a white habit and would I feel be a spiritual teacher."

Another is a Filipino-looking male guide probably with Chinese blood.

Staying close

At the time these things were told to me, I never paid much attention to them. But when I started conducting seminars, several of my sensitive students with clairvoyant vision said, independently of each other, that they saw several spirits behind me.

To date, no less than 10 different persons have seen my guides during my lectures and other public appearances.

The Chinese teacher and another that wears a robe are usually the ones seen by my students. Others have also seen my female guides.

In the late '90s, I met for the first time Nonoy Ozaeta, an architect and University of the Philippines professor who can see and talk to a person's spirit guides. He also told me I had seven spirit guides when he saw me for the first time.

Despite my skeptical and rational mind, I have come to accept that, indeed, I must have seven spirit guides who help me in my work on planet Earth in this lifetime.

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A CLIENT tries the Ultrasonic Wave.

"DEE'S DAY" ON RPN 9 celebrates Women's Month by tackling breastfeeding issues March 1, 3-4 p.m. The show's host, journalist Deedee Siytangco, is shown with executive producer Sandy S. Masigan, Dr. Rebecca B. Singson, Dr. Cynthia C. Juico, and photographer/women's health advocate Mandy Navasero. The breastfeeding episode will be replayed March 2, 8-9 a.m. "Dee's Day" is directed by Teddy Kahn.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde
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Numerical superiority

REVIEW

GERARD Butler as Leonidas, left, and Rodrigo Santoro as Xerxes

By Ruel S. De Vera

LIKE MANY OF THE CHARACters involved in Warner Bros.' "300," the Scottish actor Gerard Butler was on a quest for something. He was looking for a substantial film role that challenged him. The task began with his action figure role in "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life" and continued with his musical title role in the film version of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera."

He has found that dream role in King Leonidas, the wild-eyed, fate-driven leader of the ancient warrior people, the Spartans.

Leonidas, like all Spartans, known as the ultimate soldiers of the Old World, sought an honorable death on the battlefield. He sought that death as part of the 300 Spartans pitted against the countless hordes of the Persian Empire at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC.

> '300' the movie hews close to its comic-book source material.

Oversized form

That true-to-life last stand—the definite last stand—is immortalized in "300," a movie directed by Zack Snyder, based on Miller's 1998 comic book series of the same title. Though it is only 98 pages once compiled as a graphic novel, "300" is oversized and maximizes its widescreen nature to show just how brutal and big the battle between the Spartans and the Persians was.

Led by Leonidas, a band of devoted warriors take their positions at the Hot Gates, knowing they may never come back, determined to save Sparta from subjugation by Persia, an ancient superpower led by the self-styled god-king Xerxes (Brazilian Rodrigo Santoro).

It is essentially the tale of a few standing against the many. It is also a tale of seeking something bigger, grander. Like a cinematic equivalent of the fabled Golden Fleece, computer-generated imagery (CGI) can herald great adventure, making possible fantastic epics such as the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, as well as serve as a harbinger of trouble, saturating the public with pointless, noisy, rubbery phalanxes of action movies.

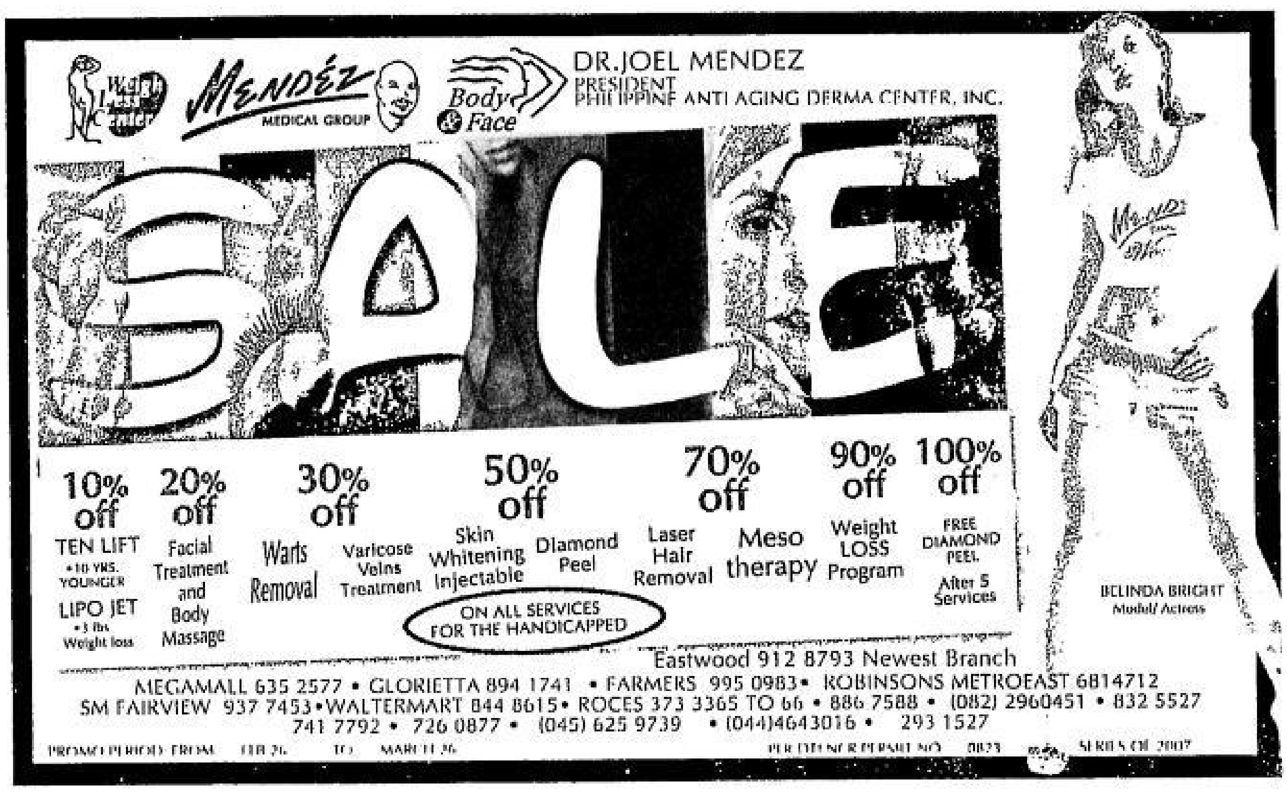
Bloody ballet

But in "300," CGI has been harnessed to create what may be the ultimate sword-and-sandals war movie. It feels like most of the movie unfolds in slow motion, with each death painstakingly choreographed. It is the spilling of blood as ballet: Snyder finds every available way of depicting death as being both necessary and meaningful, very much in keeping with the Spartans' wartime ethos.

The evocation of the heroic icons (sun, fields of grain) recalls Riddley Scott's "Gladiator," even as the killing grounds are full of grotesque detail—and vivid violence. As poetic and dynamic as they are, these battle scenes are not for children.

Snyder, in the meantime, is on a quest to evolve ever since he left behind a lucrative career in music videos for movies. From the seizure-inducing speed demons of his "Dawn of the Dead" remake, he now injects a noble ferocity to the Spartans. He also empowers the evolution of composer Tyler Bates ("City of Ghosts"), who melds elements of heavy

NUMERICAL/ D3



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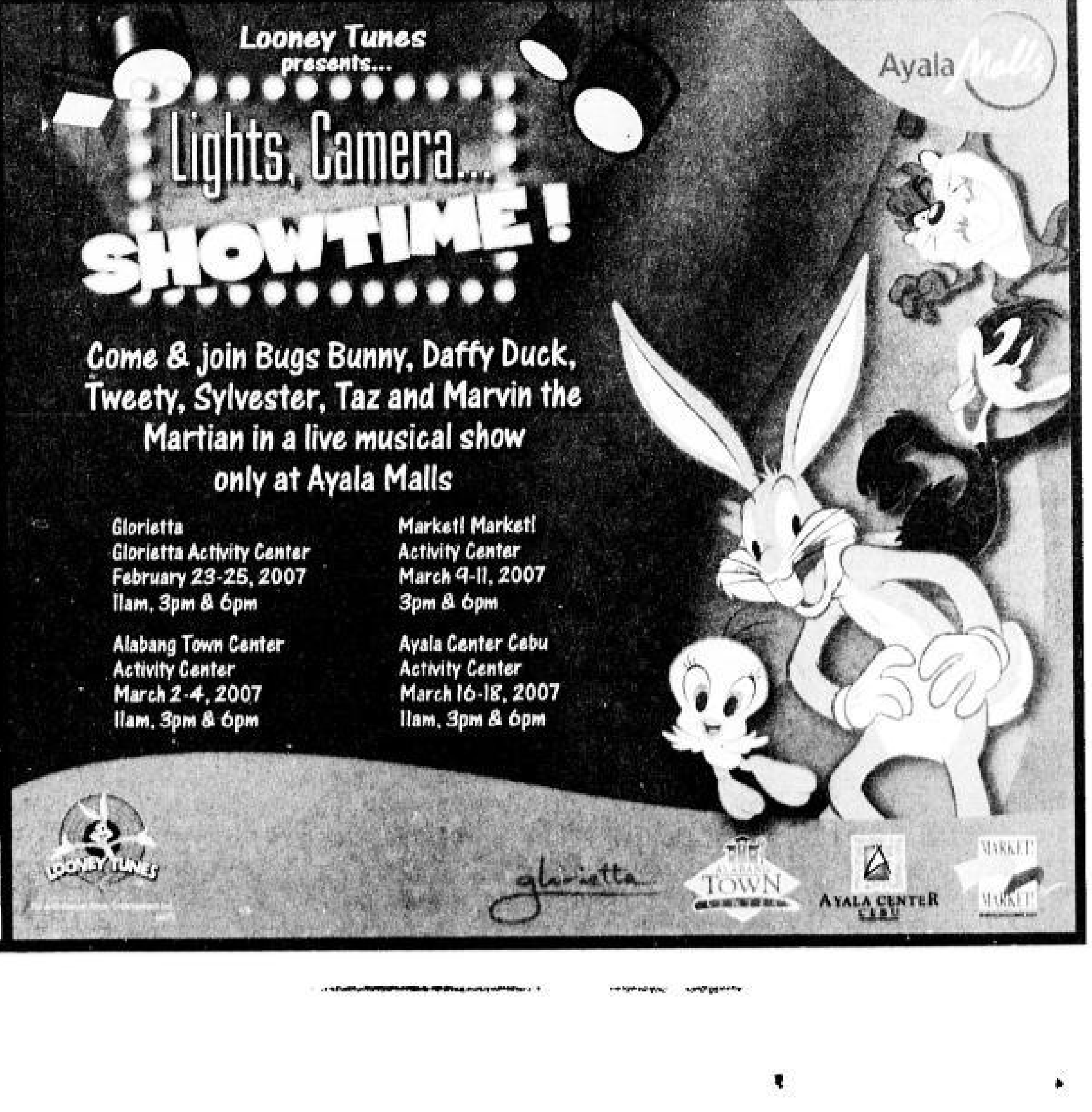

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4 (DOLBY) THE NUMBER 23

PREMIERE
(DOLBY) EPIC MOVIE

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 GHOST RIDER
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 THE PROMISE
4 EPIC MOVIE

starmall
EDSA · SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268160

3 THE PROMISE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) GHOST RIDER
5 NUMBER 23

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433894

1 THE PROMISE
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

THEATRES
[illegible]

1 APOCALYPTO
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE PROMISE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6371

1 THE PROMISE
2 APOCALYPTO
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 GHOST RIDER
3 APOCALYPTO
4 EPIC MOVIE
5 NUMBER 23
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 GHOST RIDER
8 MUSIC & LYRICS
9 THE MESSENGERS
10 THE PROMISE

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) THE PROMISE
2 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
3 (DOLBY) EPIC MOVIE
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) EPIC MOVIE
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 NUMBER 23

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 THE PROMISE
2 HANNIBAL RISING
3 TROIKA
4 CODNAME CLEANER

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 THE PROMISE
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 GHOST RIDER
2 APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5003 to 03

1 CODNAME CLEANER
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 BABEL

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 THE PROMISE
2 DÉJÀ VU

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2 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
3 (DOLBY) THE NUMBER 23
4 (DOLBY) BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE PROMISE
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 THE PROMISE
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Mandel) tel (044) 796 3320

1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 THE MESSENGER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 THE MESSENGER
2 THE PROMISE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 HANNIBAL RISING
2 APOCALYPTO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 LIGAYA KATUMBAS AY BUHAY
3 TROIKA
4 HANNIBAL RISING

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

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2 KAKAIBANG KARISMA
3 THE PROMISE
4 LITTLE CHILDREN
5 GHOST RIDER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD -2
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE MESSENGER
4 THE PROMISE

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2 HANNIBAL RISING

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MTRCB GP
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3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
MTRCB GP 12 20, 2 45
MUSIC AND LYRICS (PG-13)
5 20 7 40, 10 00

4 THE NUMBER 23
MTRCB R 13
12 40, 3 00, 5.20, 7 40, 10 00

PREMIERE THEATRE EPIC MOVIE MTRCB R 13
12 20, 2 45, 5 10, 7 35, 10.00

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GHOST RIDER PG13 2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	EPIC MOVIE R13 1:25,3:40, 5:55,8:10	THE NUMBER 23 R13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25

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5:25, 7:40, 10:00
R-13

CINEMA 5 MUSIC AND LYRICS /// PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS PG-13
10:45, 1:00, 3:15
/// 5:30, 7:50, 10:10

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March 08, 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	8:00 PM
	" DANCING W/ THE CHAMPIONS "	
March 16 & 23, 2007	SITTI IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30, 2007	[illegible]	8:00 PM

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March 9, 2007	DAVE	8:30 PM
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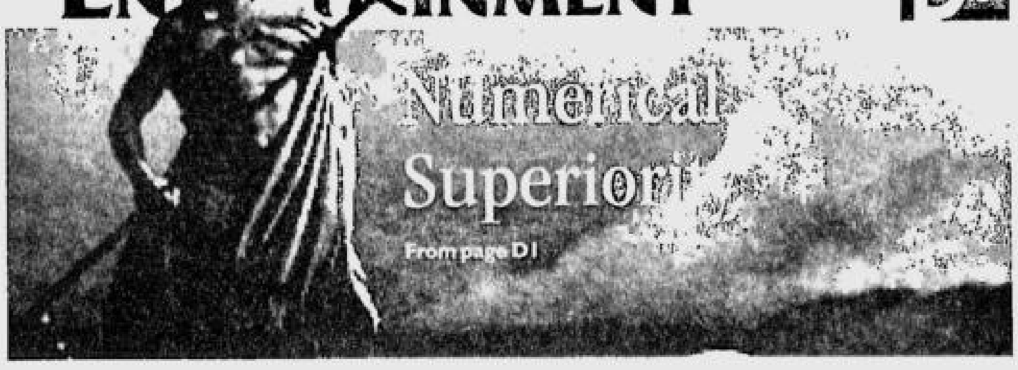

Numerical Superiori

From page D1

metal and Wagnerian sturm und drang in the martial score, and cinematographer Larry Fong (TV's "Lost").

Precious cargo

For his part, Miller seems to be on a most remarkable cinematic odyssey with his trademark comic books as precious cargo. Like many of his determined if faintly quixotic protagonists, Miller is seeking the perfect translation of comic books into cinema. His first stab at the target was co-directing "Sin City" with Robert Rodriguez ("Desperado").

While a single movie couldn't contain the atmosphere and ambiguity of Basin City's doomed denizens, the movie literally looked like Miller's panels brought to life. With "300," save for a few chinks, Miller has come closer to that goal than anyone else. One wonders what he'll come up with now that "Ronin," his take on Japanese warriors, is due for its own big-screen penetration in 2009.

Astounding

The devotion to the book is astounding. The dialogue is lifted verbatim. It feels like Snyder used the novel's pages as storyboards.

Costume designer Michael Wilkinson ("Babel") fleshes out the characters, making them uncanny three-dimensional facsimiles of the figures on the comic book pages.

The screenplay from Snyder, Kurt Johnstad and Michael B. Gordon also shadows the novel's plot, save for one wrinkle. To give Headey's Gorgo more to do, the screenwriters added a subplot that has Leonidas' wife Queen Gorgo (a fierce' Lena Headey) facing off with traitorous lawmaker Theron ("The Forgotten's" Dominic West) in front of the Spartan Council. The subplot, while entertaining, seems a bit heavy-handed.

Razor-sharp

There are razor-sharp performances all around, particularly from Butler. His Leonidas seemed hewn from the rock of the Hot Gates, and he carries himself with a proud vigor that seems both royal and ruthless. Also notable are David Wenham (Faramir from the "Lord of the Rings") as the storytelling Spartan Dilios, who becomes the anguished narrator; Santoro, who will make you believe that Xerxes really was a god-king; and Andrew Tiernan ("The Pianist"), who is transformed into the conflicted hunchback Ephialtes.

In the end, the viewer is left with a lushly constructed ode to battlefield glory, a thinking man's action movie with a videogamer's craving for bloody bells and wartorn whistles, a comic-book movie that transcends the tag. We all know how "300" ends. But like the fate of the Spartans itself, what a glorious end it is.

Warner Bros.' "300" opens in Metro Manila theaters on March 7.

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12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
ASK THE DUST
1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
THE PROMISE
12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:40
GHOST RIDER
2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:50
THE MESSENGERS
1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00
MUSIC & LYRICS
1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45
THE HOLIDAY
6:50 / 9:40
NUMBER 23
2:15 / 4:45 / 7:05 / 9:30
GHOST RIDER
1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

AliMALL 5
1 EPIC MOVIE
12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30
2 GHOST RIDER
12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00
3 NUMBER 23
1:05 / 3:30 / 5:55 / 8:20
4 THE PROMISE
12:10 R4 / 1:30 / 3:50 / 6:10 / 8:30
5 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA
12:05 R4 / 1:20 / 3:35 / 5:50 / 8:05
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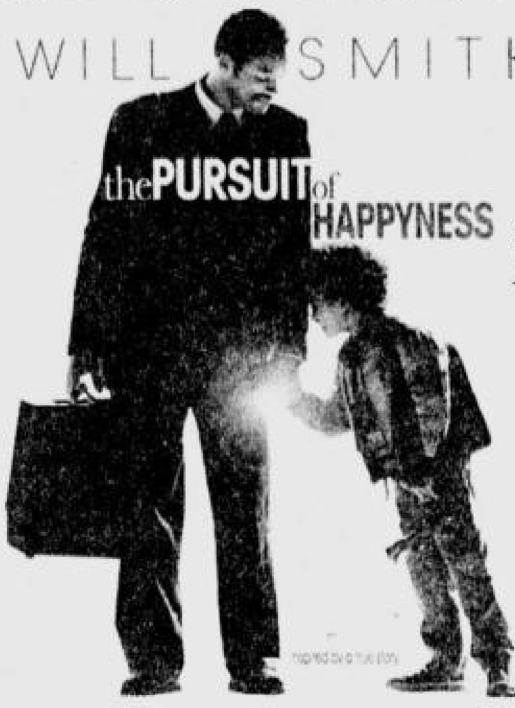

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1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 NUMBER 23
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 THE MESSENGER
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
PREMIERE CINEMA
THE PROMISE
CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
CINEMA 2
MUSIC AND LYRICS
633-8976

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1 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 GHOST RIDER
5 THE PROMISE
6 NUMBER 23
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 THE HOLIDAY
9 THE MESSENGER
10 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
11 EPIC MOVIE
12 GHOST RIDER

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 NUMBER 23
3 GHOST RIDER
4 RESERVED
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
7 THE MESSENGER
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 RESERVED
10 THE PROMISE
11 CATCH AND RELEASE
12 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 THE PROMISE
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
6 NUMBER 23
7 GHOST RIDER
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
9 EPIC MOVIE
10 THE MESSENGER
11 THE FOUNTAIN
12 FACES OF LOVE

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 GHOST RIDER
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 NUMBER 23
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 MUSIC AND LYRICS
7 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
9 THE FOUNTAIN
10 THE MESSENGER

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
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2 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
3 NUMBER 23
4 EPIC MOVIE
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 THE PROMISE

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM/ WWE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 NUMBER 23
6 MUSIC AND LYRICS
7 THE MESSENGER
8 EPIC MOVIE
9 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 NUMBER 23
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 EPIC MOVIE
5 THE CLEANER
6 GHOST RIDER
7 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 THE PROMISE
10 THE MESSENGER
11 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
12 THE HOLIDAY

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1 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
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3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
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2 THE CLEANER
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 THE PROMISE

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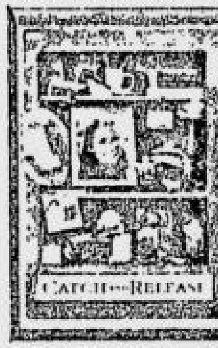
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 EPIC MOVIE



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5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 THE PROMISE
7 NUMBER 23
8 THE MESSENGER

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4 BABEL
5 THE PROMISE
6 FACES OF LOVE

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 THE FOUNTAIN

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1 THE MESSENGER
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 THE PROMISE
4 TENACIOUS D

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 BABEL
3 THE MESSENGER
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5 FACES OF LOVE
6 THE PROMISE

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1 THE HOLIDAY
2 THE PROMISE
3 THE MESSENGER
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

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1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 THE MESSENGER
4 THE PROMISE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

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1 THE PROMISE
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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1 EPIC MOVIE
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3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

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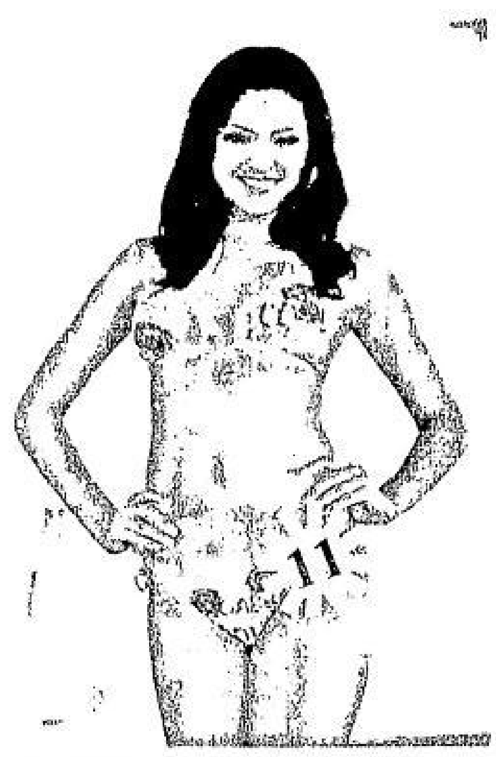
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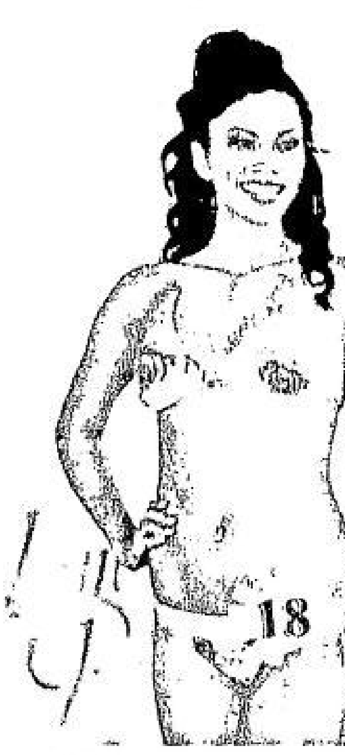
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PHOTOS BY REM ZAMORA

Bb. Pilipinas '07 batch 'beautiful'

By Armin Adina

ANNA THERESA LICAROS

THIS YEAR, THE BINIBINING PILIPINAS Charities Inc. has fielded 30 candidates instead of the traditional 24 after more deserving aspirants turned up for the annual beauty search.

Even the outgoing titleholders have expressed high hopes for the year's batch.

"Had I joined this year, I probably wouldn't win," said reigning Binibining Pilipinas-International Denille Lou Valmonte, describing the current crop of contestants as "*walang patapon* (all winner material)."

"The ladies are all beautiful, [and] a lot of them are articulate as well," observed Binibining Pilipinas-Universe Lia Andrea Ramos.

Binibining Pilipinas-World Maris Igpit confessed that she was "excited to finally know who I'm going to pass my crown to."

Presentation

Outfitted in two-piece bikinis, the official candidates wowed members of the media during the presentation last Thursday at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel, CCP Complex, in Pasay City.

A handful of familiar faces shared the stage and runway with newcomers. Mutya ng Pilipinas runners-up Abigail Cruz and Angeline Tucio, Miss Teen Philippines runner-up Nicole Schmitz and Miss Philippines-Earth alumnae Nadia Shami and Sheila Alonzo—displayed their winning forms once more.

Also in the running are Patricia Francisco and Rica Taylor, Binibini contestants in 2004 and 2005, respectively. Francisco, a 5-foot-6 model and student at the University of the Philippines, said her first attempt taught her to accept her imperfections and overcome her insecurities.

After 2004, Francisco, 21, traveled around the world. She visited India with Miriam Quiambao, Miss Universe 1999 first runner-up. There, she said, they met Miss Universe 1994 Sushmita Sen, who was crowned in the Philippines.

TV personalities

Two television personalities are competing: "Starstruck Season 2's" Ailyn Luna and fellow GMA 7 artist Maggie Wilson, both 17. Wilson said she decided to join "to share with the people what God has given me—skills, beauty and wit."

UP summa cum laude graduate Anna Theresa Licaros, 22, a law student, said she gave the pageant a shot after a lot of prodding from family and friends.

Licaros said she felt no pressure. "Vying for a beauty title is very different from running for honors. The criteria are not the same. But aspiring to become a lawyer-beauty queen opens a new dimension in my life."

Another crowd pleaser was 2005 Miss Baguio Liezel Verses, a 22-year-old registered nurse who said she sought "unity and harmony among our fellowmen so our country may achieve progress."

More standouts

Other standouts were Erika Pangan, Paulette Quinto and Jaime Burgos, both almost six feet tall.

GMA 7 executive Bang Arespacochaga promised minimal changes in the flow of the program, which will have "Asian Royalty" for its theme. "Opening number *pa lang bongga na*," she announced.

Quiambao will host the show with Paolo Bediones and Raymond Gutierrez, together with former titleholders Gionna Cabrera and Mafae Yunon.

The country's representatives to the Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss International pageants will be named on the Binibining Pilipinas coronation night on March 3 at the Araneta Coliseum. GMA 7 airs the program at 9:30 p.m.

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R-13

2 GHOST RIDER
2:55, 5:40, 8:35, 11:05
PG-13

3 THE NUMBER 23
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
R-18

4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
1:20, 3:45, 6:10
G
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8:35, 11:00
G

SNEAK PREVIEWS TODAY
Regular Run begins March 7
MTRCB ▶ G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE
BEST ACTOR WILL SMITH
"★★★★! ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR. WILL SMITH GIVES THE PERFORMANCE OF HIS CAREER."
Shawn Edwards, FOX TV
"TWO THUMBS UP"
Richard Roeper and Aisha Tyler, Guest Critic, EBERT & ROEPER
"A FEEL-GOOD MOVIE..., RAISE A GLASS TO SALUTE WILL SMITH... HE EMERGES A WINNER."
Leah Rozen, PEOPLE
"A TOUCHING MOVIE, WITH A BEAUTIFUL AND UNDERSTATED PERFORMANCE FROM WILL SMITH."
Owen Gleiberman, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
"★★★★! POWERFUL AND UPLIFTING!"
Shawn Edwards, FOX TV
WINNER Will Smith Best Actor
WINNER Jaden Christopher Syre Smith Best Young Actor
WILL SMITH
the PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY
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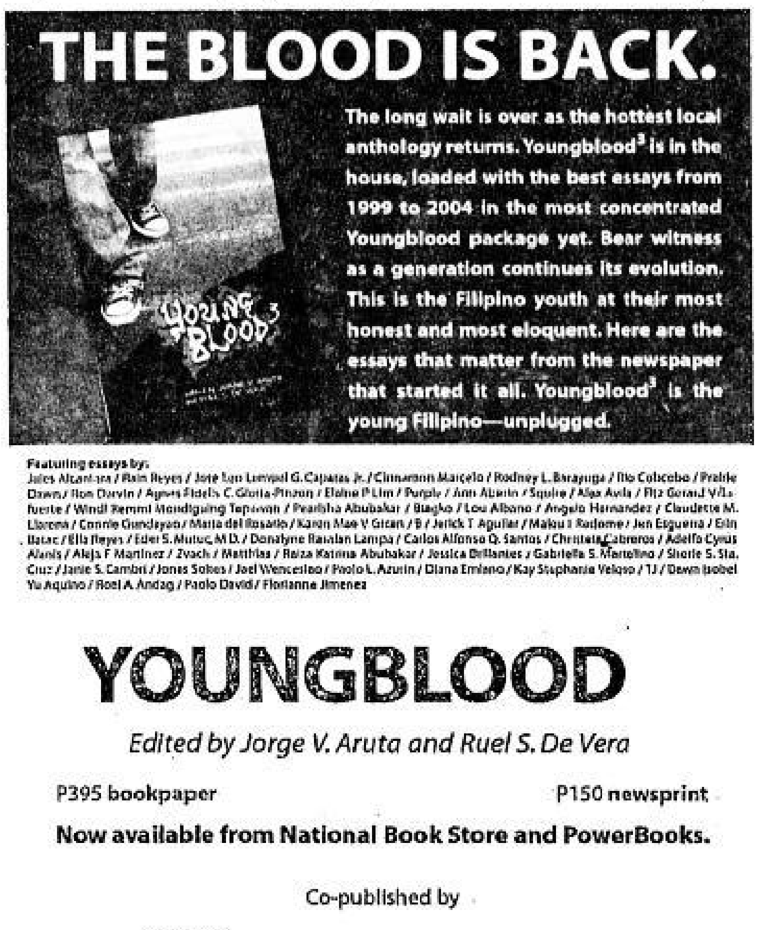
THE BLOOD IS BACK.
The long wait is over as the hottest local anthology returns. Youngblood³ is in the house, loaded with the best essays from 1999 to 2004 in the most concentrated Youngblood package yet. Bear witness as a generation continues its evolution. This is the Filipino youth at their most honest and most eloquent. Here are the essays that matter from the newspaper that started it all. Youngblood³ is the young Filipino—unplugged.
Featuring essays by:
Jules Alcantara / Rain Reyes / Jose Luis Lemuel G. Capatas Jr. / Cinnamon Marcelo / Rodney L. Barayuga / Ilo Colcobo / Prairie Dawn / Ron Darvin / Agnes Fidelis C. Gloria-Pinzon / Elaine P. Lim / Purple / Ann Aberin / Squire / Alex Avila / Fitz Gerald Villafuerte / Windi Remmi Mondiguing Tapawan / Pearlsha Abubakar / Biagko / Lou Albano / Angelo Hernandez / Claudette M. Llorens / Connie Gundayao / Maria del Rosario / Karen Mae V. Gican / B / Jerick T. Aguilar / Malou Radome / Jen Esguerra / Erin Batac / Ella Reyes / Eder S. Muluc, M.D. / Donalyne Basalan Lampa / Carlos Alfonso Q. Santos / Christeta Cabreros / Adelfo Cyrus Alanis / Aleja F. Martinez / Zvach / Matthias / Raiza Katrina Abubakar / Jessica Brillantes / Gabriella S. Martelino / Sherie S. Sta. Cruz / Janie S. Cambri / Jones Sabas / Joel Wenceslao / Paolo L. Azurin / Diana Emiano / Kay Stephanie Veloso / TJ / Dawn Isobel Yu Aquino / Roel A. Andag / Paolo David / Florianne Jimenez
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P395 bookpaper P150 newsprint
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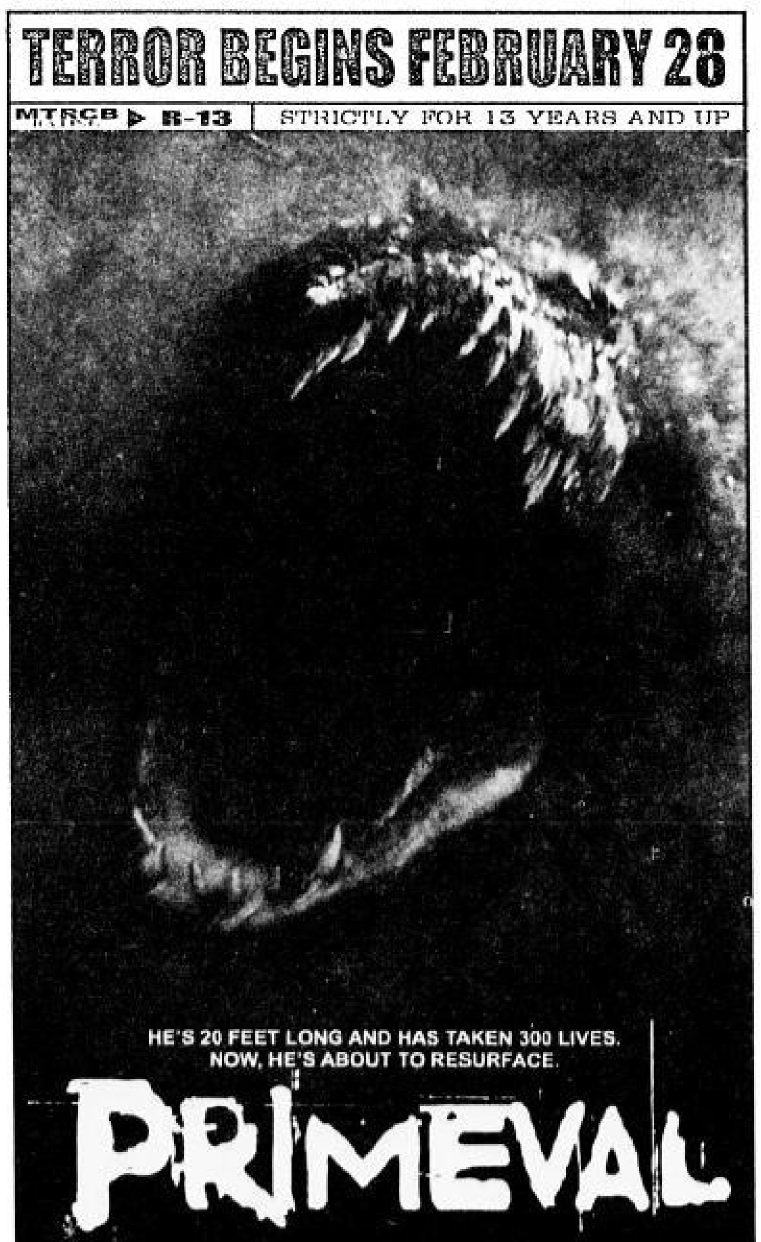
TERROR BEGINS FEBRUARY 28
MTRCB ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS AND UP
HE'S 20 FEET LONG AND HAS TAKEN 300 LIVES.
NOW, HE'S ABOUT TO RESURFACE.
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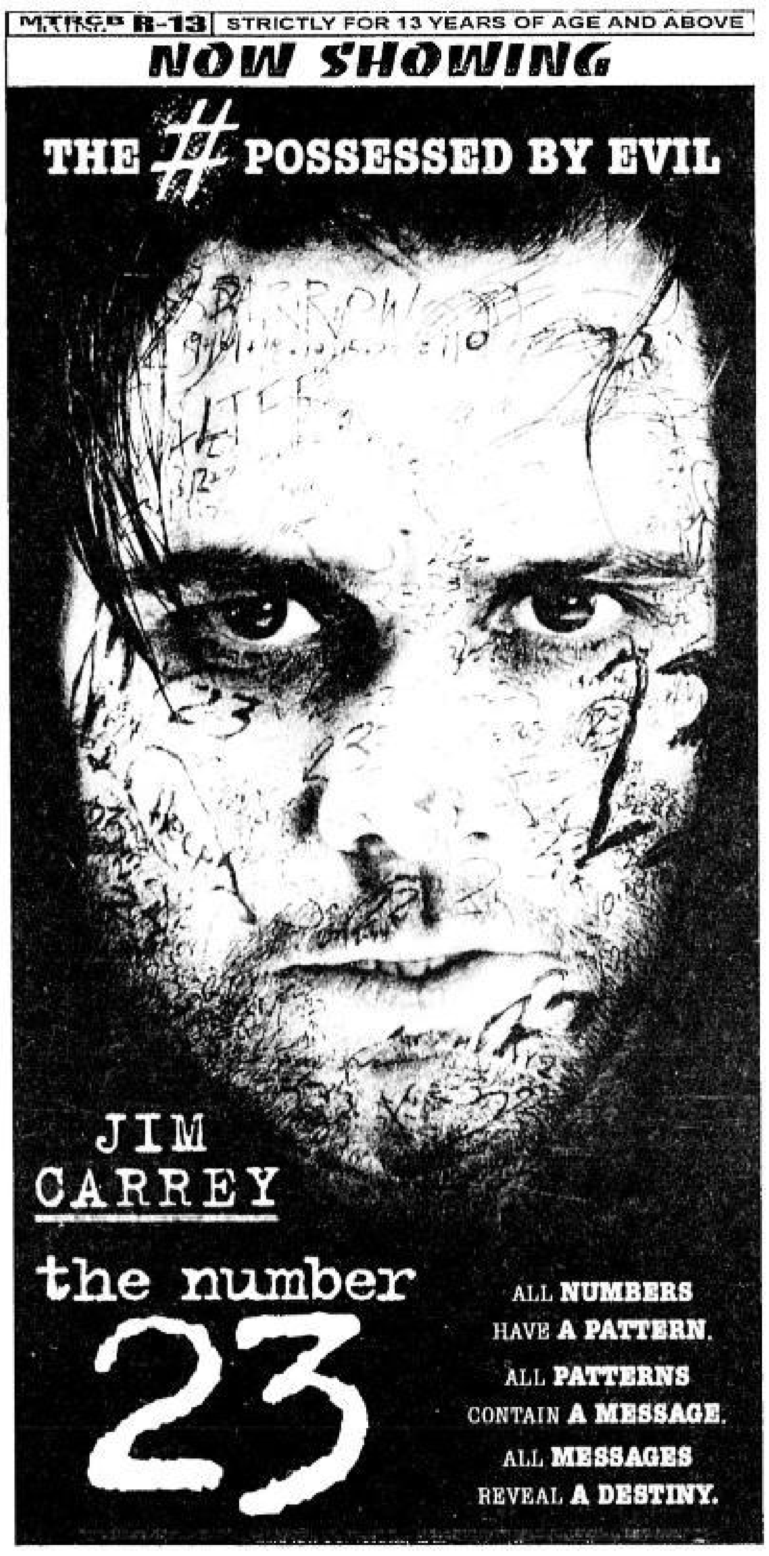
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JIM CARREY
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ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE.
ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

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Flushed Away
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